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AN
(Churchill)
Scott

WINSTON SPENCER CHURCHILL

WINSTON SPENCER CHURCHILL, M.P.

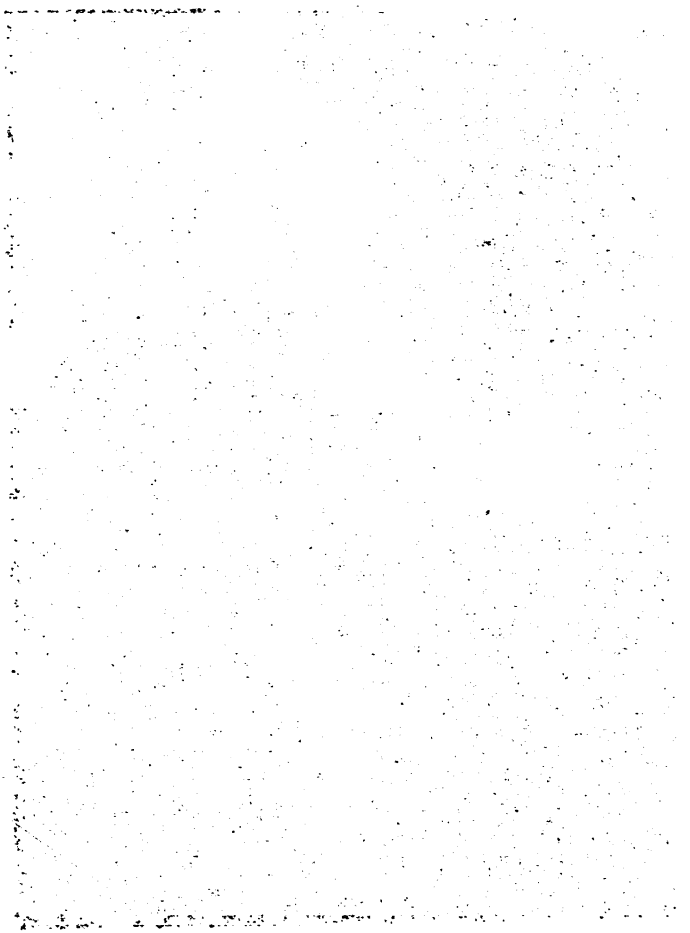
WINSTON SPENCER CHURCHILL

BY

A. MacCALLUM SCOTT

WITH SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS

METHUEN & CO.
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
LONDON



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35514 A

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PREFACE

IN writing this study of a character which has all the elements of greatness in it, and of a career, the foundations of which have been laid upon a noble scale, I have enjoyed no peculiar advantages. The sources of my information have been open to every one. They have been the various books which Mr Churchill has published, the columns of the daily, weekly and monthly press, and the pages of Hansard. My motive has been an earnest desire to advance those three great causes with which Mr Churchill's name has been primarily associated — Retrenchment, Army Reform, and Freedom of Trade. There is no man living to-day, either in or out of the House of Commons, who has advocated these causes with greater eloquence or in whose argument severe, practical, and economic reasoning has been more completely transfused with profound moral considerations. Mr Churchill has recently changed his party colour. This

record of action and of utterance shows that he has not changed his principles and his ideals.

I desire to thank Mr James Drysdale for his kindness in reading over a chapter dealing with recent events in Parliament, and in making several useful suggestions. I thank Mr F. Carruthers Gould for permission to reproduce several of those inimitable cartoons which have helped the *Westminster Gazette* to add both to the wisdom and to the gaiety of nations. I thank also Mr George R. Halkett, Editor of the *Pall Mall Magazine*, for permission to reproduce his striking caricature portrait. Finally, I must thank Mr H. W. Massingham for the generous permission which he has given me to quote so freely from his "Pictures in Parliament" in the *Daily News*. These vivid, descriptive sketches are absolutely indispensable to those who would understand the personal forces in the public life of to-day, and I trust that at the end of the present Parliament they will not be allowed to remain buried in the files of a daily newspaper.

A. M. S.

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WINSTON SPENCER CHURCHILL

CHAPTER I

YOUTH AND GENIUS

WINSTON Spencer Churchill was born in 1874. He has been in Parliament four years, and already he has won for himself a foremost place among the politicians of his day. He has made history for parties, and there be discerning men who predict that he will make history for the nation. The youth of thirty is confidently spoken of by his admirers as a future Prime Minister. He is more than able to hold his own against the most experienced gladiators of the Parliamentary arena. He has stood up to Mr Chamberlain like David before Goliath, and though the

giant was not slain, the stripling proved himself able to give, blow for blow, as good as he received. He has rivalled Mr Balfour in subtlety and outmanœuvred him in strategy, until the Prime Minister fled from his presence. In power of interesting and humouring masses of men he yields nothing to Lord Rosebery, and, further, he can touch that deep chord of moral earnestness, he can make that grave and solemn appeal to high and noble emotion, as can only one other statesman of our time — Mr John Morley. Withal, in his speech one can discern the accents of the larger utterance of an earlier day :—

> "I bring again the fine ideal stuff
> The young gods took to frame the world of old."

He is of the race of giants. In the tempestuous gambols and soaring ambitions of his youth, we read the promise of a mighty manhood.

But politics is only the most recent field for the exploits of Winston Spencer Churchill. Before ever he thought of Parliament, or Parliament thought of him, he had won for

himself a world-wide reputation in the fields of war and of literature. At the age of twenty-five he had gone through four arduous campaigns—in Cuba, under the Spanish General, Campos; on the North-West Frontier, with the Malakand Field Force, under General Sir Bindon Blood; in the Soudan, under the Sirdar, now Lord Kitchener; and in South Africa, under General Buller and Lord Roberts. He held the Spanish Order of Military Merit; he had been mentioned in dispatches from Malakand; he had ridden in the memorable charge of the 21st Lancers at Omdurman; he had been captured by the Boers after an exploit of singular heroism, had been held a prisoner at Pretoria, and had escaped after a series of thrilling adventures and hair-breadth escapes; he had been under fire on Spion Kop, had ridden with the relieving force into Ladysmith, had marched with Ian Hamilton to Pretoria, and had been the first to bring the welcome news of succour to his former fellow-prisoners.

Even this strenuous life did not provide a sufficient outlet for his energies. He was

already the author of five books which had found favour with the public, not less on account of their own intrinsic merits than on account of the advertisement which had been given them by the adventurous career of their writer. Vivid and picturesque special correspondence, shrewd and suggestive military criticism, balanced historical narrative and interesting political romance flowed easily from his pen. His literary power was as undoubted as his courage, and his writings gave abundant evidence of mature thought, of penetrating criticism and of profound political instinct. Not for nothing had ambitious youth taken for models Burke, Macaulay and Disraeli. He was worthy of such masters, and profiting by their example he brought to his task a personality and a genius of his own.

To a writer in the *Daily Mail* belongs the credit of having first declared to an incredulous and amused world, on December 2nd, 1898, that a certain junior subaltern of Hussars, a precocious boy of twenty-three, contained the seeds of future greatness, and belonged by right divine to the world's

highest order of merit. He had just returned from the Nile Campaign. His book on *The River War* had not been issued. He had not fought his first and unsuccessful candidature at Oldham, but he had just found time to make his political *début* in a couple of boyish speeches at Dover and Rotherhithe. A number of people interested in frontier questions had read with appreciation his book, *With the Malakand Field Force;* the readers of the *Morning Post* had realised that the editor of that journal had discovered a brilliant and dashing war correspondent, but beyond these and the circle of his own immediate friends it may be said that his name, and even his existence, were unknown to the British public. The anonymous writer in the *Daily Mail* must have enjoyed singular opportunities of observing the maturing mind of this "youngest man in Europe," as he called him, and must in addition have possessed unbounded confidence in his own judgment to write these words:—

"In years he is a boy; in temperament he is also a boy; but in intention, in de-

liberate plan, purpose, adaptation of means to ends, he is already a man. In any other generation but this he would be a child. Any other than he, being a junior subaltern of Hussars, would be a boisterous, simple, full-hearted, empty-headed boy. But Mr Churchill is a man, with ambitions fixed, with the steps towards their attainment clearly defined, with a precocious, almost uncanny, judgment as to the efficacy of the means to the end.

"He is what he is by breeding. He is the eldest son of Lord Randolph Churchill, and his mother is American. Lord Randolph was not so precocious as he was popularly supposed to be, but they begin early in America. From his father he derives the hereditary aptitude for affairs, the grand style of entering upon them, which are not the less hereditary in British noble families because they skip nine generations out of ten. Winston Spencer Churchill can hardly have seen much of Government and Parliament and forensic politics at twenty-three, but he moves in and out among their deviations with the ease, if

not with the knowledge, of a veteran statesman. But that inheritance alone would not give him his grip and facility at twenty-three; with us hereditary statesmen and party leaders ripen later. From his American strain he adds to this a keenness, a shrewdness, a half-cynical, personal ambition, a natural aptitude for advertisement, and, happily, a sense of humour.

"At the present moment he happens to be a soldier, but that has nothing whatever to do with his interest in the public eye. He may and may not possess the qualities which make a great general, but the question is of no sort of importance. In any case they will never be developed, for, if they exist, they are overshadowed by qualities which might make him, almost at will, a great popular leader, a great journalist, or the founder of a great advertising business.

. . . . . .

"He is ambitious and he is calculating; yet he is not cold—and that saves him. His ambition is sanguine, runs in a torrent, and the calculation is hardly more than the rock

or the stump which the torrent strikes for a second, yet which suffices to direct its course. It is not so much that he calculates how he is to make his career a success—how, frankly, he is to boom—but that he has a queer, shrewd power of introspection, which tells him his gifts and character are such as will make him boom. He has not studied to make himself a demagogue, and he happens to know it.

. . . . . .

"What he will become, who shall say? At the rate he goes there will hardly be room for him in Parliament at thirty or in England at forty."

It is six years since these words were written, and they no longer seem extravagant. The subaltern of Hussars has become a political leader. In the first division on Mr Brodrick's army scheme he was the sole Conservative to walk into the lobby against it. Two years later he had gathered round him a party and destroyed the scheme. He has challenged the supremacy of the greatest politician of our time, and rent in twain a

great political party. He is a protagonist in the greatest political fight of a century. He has given phrases to the political currency of the day, he has kindled the popular imagination, and given life to the dry bones of retrenchment, army reform, and free trade. Bitterly hated or enthusiastically acclaimed, he is a force to be reckoned with in the destinies of the country.

It is my intention in the following chapter to attempt to trace some of the qualities of intellect, of heart, and of will of which in December 1898 this marvellous boy had already given evidence, and which justified a prophecy apparently so wild.

CHAPTER II

SUBALTERN OF HUSSARS

PRIDE of race, boundless ambition, and the instincts of a demagogue, are Winston Churchill's by direct inheritance. His father was Lord Randolph Churchill, the darling of democracy, a wayward genius who flashed across the political firmament like a dazzling meteor burning himself out too soon. His mother, who has now become Mrs George Cornwallis-West, belonged to the ultra-fashionable set of political women. It was largely owing to her zeal that the Primrose League became the powerful social instrument it did become. In American women the Yankee genius for advertising becomes a passion for *réclame*. From his trans-Atlantic ancestry Winston inherits a full measure of this instinct. The immortal Barnum himself had not a greater gift for

MISS JENNIE JEROME
(Lady Randolph Churchill)

making himself and his affairs the talk of the world. It is achieved, not by any vulgar display or mountebank tricks, but by that subtle magnetism for which we have no other name than "personality." Winston advertises himself as simply and unconsciously as he breathes.

His grandfather was the seventh Duke of Marlborough, and he is of the same stock as John Churchill, the first Duke of Marlborough, the handsome stripling who forsook the dissolute court of Charles II. for the arduous life of camps, and who won fame and fortune upon the battlefields of Europe. Kin to the Cecils, he belongs to one of the greatest governing families in England, a family which from the time of Queen Elizabeth has been fruitful in great ministers of State. The mingled strains of the grave wisdom of the Cecils and the hot passion of the Churchills passed on through the medium of Lord Randolph might well blend to produce a modern Alcibiades.

Perhaps it is due to the fact that he is not a "Varsity" man that Winston Churchill owes the early practical bent of his mind. The

sudden transference from the ordered life of school to the delicious freedom of Oxford or Cambridge offers great temptations to a youth of his ardent temperament. Lord Randolph Churchill is said to have squandered some of the best years of his life on the light follies of youth. Winston went straight from Harrow to Sandhurst, passing out a year later, in 1894, with first-class honours. In 1894, at the age of twenty, he obtained his commission as a Lieutenant in a crack cavalry corps, the 4th Hussars, and his career commenced.

The junior subaltern of Hussars looked around him for worlds to conquer. "The world is mine oyster," he said, and without more to-do he set about opening it. His corps was stationed at Aldershot, not a very promising field for "a young man in a hurry." The tame delights of soldiering at home in time of peace failed to satisfy his soul. A month of it was enough to make him feel like a finely tempered sword rusting in its scabbard. He was not content to play the squire of dames, and disport himself gaily till promotion came to him with

a rustle of silk down the War Office stairs.

He looked abroad.

In the Island of Cuba there was war, and Cuba became the magnetic centre of the world for him. Spain was still struggling through the weary guerilla war with the insurgents. London was gay and *débonnaire*, but as the young subaltern strolled from Pall Mall into his Club, the tape-machine was clicking off the news of alarms in the night, of shooting among the trees, of heroism and treachery, of successful strategy, and of the last cartridge that saves a man from captivity. There, and not in Aldershot, was the school for a soldier.

"I can never doubt which is the right end [of the wire] to be at. It is better to be making the news than taking it; to be an actor rather than a critic."[1]

Within the year Winston was at the other end of the wire writing the news that was clicked out in the club. The press had opened up a golden road for him. He

[1] *The Story of the Malakand Field Force*, p. 141.

applied for and secured long leave of absence. He sailed as war correspondent for the *Daily Graphic*, the paper for which his father had written his South African letters. In a fortnight he was in the thick of it, and when the war correspondent returned it was with the first-class Order of Military Merit from the Spanish general.

He reached home just in time to sail with his regiment to India. But India proved as unsatisfactory as Aldershot. For a year he fretted at the dull routine of barrack life. And when at last the frontier tribes broke out in revolt he had the mortification of finding that British cavalry was intended for ornament not use.

"The authorities have steadily refused to allow any British cavalry to cross the frontier. Of course, this is defended on the ground of expense. 'British cavalry costs so much,' it is said, 'and natives do the work just as well.'"[1]

At the end of the summer of 1897 there took place one of the most wide-spread and dangerous of frontier risings. Under the influence of a "Mad Mullah," which is our

[1] *The Story of the Malakand Field Force*, p. 260.

polite name for a Mohammedan religious revivalist, the tribes rose and attacked the fort at the Malakand Pass with singular ferocity. The Malakand Field Force was at once brought together under Sir Bindon Blood, and we were embarked upon another bloody and costly frontier war.

Winston was left behind with the Hussars, for a British cavalry regiment was "a sword too costly to be drawn." Great news was passing along the telegraph wire, and he was at the wrong end. But "Difficulties were made to be overcome," was the motto of "Pushful, the Younger," as he has been dubbed by a *Daily Chronicle* reviewer. Before the campaign had proceeded a month he bobbed up at the front as a member of that band of "disconsolate young gentlemen endeavouring to fight their country's battles disguised as journalists."

"Having realised that if a British cavalry officer waits till he is ordered on active service he is likely to wait a considerable time, I obtained six weeks' leave of absence from my regiment, and on the 2nd of September arrived at Malakand as press correspondent of the *Pioneer* and *Daily Telegraph*,

and in the hope of being sooner or later attached to the force in a military capacity."[1]

The importunate subaltern had his will. He was attached to the 31st Punjaub Infantry, obtained his baptism of fire in his country's service and saw much of the fiercest of the fighting. The dispatches mention "the courage and resolution of Lieutenant W. L. S. Churchill, 4th Hussars, the correspondent of the *Pioneer* newspaper with the force, who made himself useful at a critical moment."

Again, in the following year, he was so fortunate as to accompany the Tirah Expeditionary Force as orderly officer to Sir William Lockhart.

Returning from India in 1898 he proceeded straight to the War Office to apply for employment in the Nile Expeditionary Force which was then preparing for the final advance from the Atbara to Omdurman. Many others were there on the same errand, but, in his own words, "Success rewarded perseverance." He was attached to the 21st Lancers. He also carried the commission of

[1] *The Story of the Malakand Field Force*, p. 127, note.

LIEUTENANT WINSTON S. CHURCHILL
4th Hussars

the *Morning Post* as war correspondent, much to the disgust, it is said, of Sir Herbert Kitchener.

In four years, by dint of much asking and pushing, this irrepressible subaltern had managed to take part in no fewer than four campaigns.

Eighteen months later, writing of a similar episode in the early career of Lieutenant-General Ian Hamilton, he recommends certain reflections to "the attention of young officers." As they illustrate the guiding principle of his own career they deserve to be set out in full here :—

"Be it always remembered that the regulations of the army are formed to make all people quite alike, one uniform pattern, and on one level of intelligence—not yet the highest. You do not rise by the regulations, but in spite of them. Therefore, in all matters of active service the subaltern must never take 'No' for an answer. He should get to the front at all costs. For every fifty men who will express a desire to go on service in the mess or the club, and will grumble if they are not selected, there is only about one who really means business, and will take the trouble and

run the risk of going to the front on the chance. The competition is much less keen when you get there. I know something of this myself, and am convinced of its truth.

"The subaltern really stands on velvet in the matter. If he succeeds, all is well. If he gets rebuked and ordered down he must try again. What can the authorities do? They cannot very well shoot him. At the worst, they can send him back to his regiment, stop his leave for six months, and some choleric old martinet who was a a young man once, though he had half forgotten it, will write in some ponderous book in Pall Mall against the offender's name: 'Keen as mustard—takes his own line—to be noted for active service if otherwise qualified.'"[1]

But let us return to the Nile. Up that green ribbon, unrolled upon the desert sands, the army of Kitchener had marched, month after month, for nearly three years, dragging painfully after it the railway and the telegraph line, and accompanied by the Nile flotilla. The long struggle was nearing its dramatic close. The Mahdi, Mohammed Ahmed, had risen, like a prophet in Israel, to lead his people out of their degrading slavery

[1] *Ian Hamilton's March*, pp. 123-24.

to the Turks. The rebellion headed by the Mahdi was, in Gladstone's words, "that of a people rightly struggling to be free." He was a man of noble life, of sincere patriotism, and of deep religious fervour, and, above all, he was a born leader of men. In his lifetime his efforts were crowned with complete success. He drove out "the Turks"; he founded an empire; he ruled his people in security. But with his death, the empire which he founded on religious enthusiasm became a military despotism. The Khalifa succeeded the Mahdi in the Soudan. The British succeeded the Turks in Egypt. Civilisation and barbarism struggled for the control of the upper waters of the Nile.

With his railway Kitchener had overcome the terrors of the desert; with his telegraph wire he summoned out of the vasty deep a race of white men different from any "Turks" the Dervishes had ever known; with his engines of destruction he "terribly carpeted the earth with dead." Firket had fallen before him, and Merawi, and Abu Hamed, and Berber, and the camp

on the Atbara; and now he paused for the final swoop on Omdurman.

Churchill left the Atbara camp a few hours behind the 21st Lancers, hoping to catch them up at their first camping place. Such an opportunity for an adventure was not to be missed. Before he joined his regiment he contrived to lose himself in the desert, and to find his way again by the help of "the glorious constellation of Orion." Adventures are to the adventurous.

At Omdurman he was "in at the death." He was an actor in one of the most memorable episodes in a battle which, measured by the destruction it caused, was one of the greatest pitched battles in modern history. He rode in the "Lancers Charge."

The charge of the 21st Lancers at Omdurman was one of those deeds of instant decision and superb daring which, like the Charge of the Light Brigade, acquire a glory far out of proportion to any actual military advantage achieved.

The Lancers were ordered to cut off the

retreat of the Dervishes on the city. In the line of retreat was a small Khor or gulley which the scouts reported to be held by about 700 Dervishes. Riding up boldly, the Lancers almost fell into a fatal ambush. The Khalifa had meantime contrived to reinforce the men holding the Khor by another 2000 men. The earth seemed to open and pour forth armed men. Without a moment's hesitation the 400 Lancers charged 2700 of the fiercest and most courageous infantry in the world. The Dervishes were "cool, determined men, practised in war and familiar with cavalry."[1] It was man to man, arm to arm, and lance to sword and spear. The only advantage which civilisation retained was discipline and mutual confidence.

Like an iron harrow the Lancers tore through the Dervish mass. For two minutes of eternity the killing lasted, and "each man saw the world along his lance, under his guard, or through the back sight of his pistol."[2] Then the regiment drew clear of the enemy, leaving behind it

[1] *The River War*, vol. ii. p. 137. [2] *Ibid.*

a score of unrecognisable corpses. Five officers, sixty-five men and one hundred and nineteen horses out of less than four hundred had been killed or wounded. At 200 yards they halted and reformed, ready to ride back into the inferno; but a military judgment as cool as the original resolve to charge, dictated a flanking movement. They wheeled to the right, and, dismounting, poured a heavy fire down the Khor into the close-packed Dervishes. The Arabs were shaken; they endeavoured to re-form under the accurate fire, and then sullenly withdrew, leaving the Lancers with their wounded and their dead.

Churchill, "as on other occasions," came safely through without a scratch or tear. The curious reader will be interested in his account of his impressions during the charge:—

"The whole scene flickered exactly like a cinematograph picture; and, besides, I remember no sound. The event seemed to pass in absolute silence. The yells of the enemy, the shouts of the soldiers, the

firing of many shots, the clashing of sword and spear, were unnoticed by the senses, unregistered by the brain. Several others say the same. Perhaps it is possible for the whole of a man's faculties to be concentrated in the eye, bridle-hand, and trigger-finger, and withdrawn from all other parts of the body."[1]

So much for the man of action in these first four years of crowded life. But these years have another interest for us. Already the young eagle was eyeing the distant peaks from his eyrie. His exuberant vitality found the camp all too narrow a field for his varied interests. He was not merely the man of action; he was the chronicler, the commentator, and the political theorist.

From his first campaign Churchill combined the duties of soldier and war correspondent. He saw no active service with his own regiment, but by imperturbable perseverance he was able to secure leave of absence, to make his way to the front, and by hook or by crook to get himself attached to some regiment there.

Later, it became impossible for him to

[1] *The River War*, vol. ii. p. 142.

combine these functions. He was not content with mere narrative. He must needs criticise his superiors, offer advice to the Government, and diverge into politics. The rules of the Service could not hold this subaltern, and when he went to South Africa it was no longer as a commissioned officer, but as a war correspondent pure and simple.

The phenomenal success of his letters from the front opened up to the young lieutenant an avenue to a wider career than any the camp could offer. From the first he took rank among the foremost correspondents of his time. To be among the first with G. W. Steevens was no mean achievement.

He had, in the highest degree, the knack of telling a story. Whether it was the history of a racial movement, the plan of a campaign, the varying fortunes of a battle, a heroic deed, or a personal adventure, the narrative flowed lightly and freely from his pen. The magic dramatic touch, which study and knowledge and experience cannot give, was his by a sure instinct. His first book, *The Story of the Malakand Field*

Force, was in truth "a story," more readable than most fiction, full of midnight attacks, heroic defences, and mad gallops under fire.

There is another quality in his style which made for popularity. Few special correspondents have surpassed him in the vividness of his descriptive power. He describes a man or a landscape and they seem to lie like a picture on the page. It is no laboured effect produced by piling epithets upon one another, or by a meticulous selection of adjectives. It is all done with a fine, careless unconsciousness and profusion.

Besides these more popular gifts, his early letters give evidence of profounder qualities, of a deep humanity, of a wide outlook, and of a broad, tolerant spirit. He is always reaching after higher issues, and the reader finds the narrative kindling into great thoughts. He is more than a recorder; he is a commentator. He is master of, and not mastered by, his material. We perceive the alchemy of the artist's and of the thinker's mind, and we read not only

for the sake of the events but for the sake of Winston Spencer Churchill. The reader feels himself in touch with a real and dynamic personality.

One could see that he had gone to good masters. It did not require the frequent references to Burke and Macaulay to tell the reader where the young author caught his grand manner, his rolling rhetoric, and his balanced periods. Of his first book even so scholastic a critic as the *Athenæum* was moved to observe:—"Mr Churchill may be only a reader of Burke and Disraeli, but in many passages these writers speak again, and the application of Burke's style in particular to the affairs of war yields here and there passages worthy of Napier's great history — the model of military literature."

The River War: An Historial Account of the Reconquest of the Soudan was a more ambitious undertaking. These two large and elaborate volumes are the fruits of much study, observation, and reflection. They contain a careful history of the origin and success of the Mahdi's revolt, of the

restoration of Egypt to prosperity under British influence, and of the military operations against the Khalifa which ended in so dramatic and signal a victory at Omdurman. It is a vivid and picturesque narrative of sustained interest; but it is more, it is a historical summing up, a weighing in the balance, a testing of actions and results by political and moral principles. There is abundant evidence of a keen and penetrating intellect constantly revolving facts and making judgments. Some of these judgments were sufficiently remarkable to cause quite a sensation on their publication.

The *Outlook* critic may have been enthusiastic, but he did not shoot very wide of the mark when he said that "in *The River War* Mr Winston Spencer Churchill comes, we think, very near doing for the Soudan what Kinglake did for the Crimea."

A junior subaltern with pronounced military and political views, with no false modesty in expressing them, and who possesses the ear of the public through one of the greatest

newspapers, could hardly be other than a very embarrassing *enfant terrible* to his superior officers. The surprising thing is that he seems to have come out of his escapades so easily. Of jealousy and dislike, and spiteful attempts to snub, he encountered enough and to spare. He was not popular in the service. But these things troubled him little. He was a very self-centred and self-possessed young man, and if he achieved his omelette, he did not grumble because a few eggs were broken.

The volume on the Malakand Field Force contains many pertinent observations on arms and tactics. On the Lee-Metford rifle, the dum-dum bullet, transport and commissariat, artillery tactics, the use of the lance, long and short service, and the psychology of courage, he does not hesitate to offer confident opinions. With what point these opinions are expressed the following example is evidence. He is referring to the official reluctance to employ so costly a weapon as British cavalry across the frontier.

"Though it is unlikely that the Government of India will take any advice, either wholly or in good part, I hereby exhort them to quit the folly of a 'penny wise' policy, and to adhere consistently to the principles of employing British and native troops in India in a regular proportion. That is to say, that when two native cavalry regiments have been sent on service across the frontier, the third cavalry regiment so sent shall be British." [1]

Since the conclusion of the South African War the attention of Parliament has been seldom long diverted from the intricate problems of Army Reform. Mr Churchill has become the spokesman of a party and his has been the most potent voice which has been raised in the many discussions which have raged round the innumerable schemes, reports, and estimates, which have been submitted to Parliament. The germ of most of his criticism of Mr Brodrick's ill-fated Army Scheme, his distrust of the attempt to solve insular problems on Continental lines, his refusal to be drawn into the meshes of European warfare, his faith in the voluntary principle,

[1] *The Story of the Malakand Field Force*, p. 261.

coupled with sufficient inducements, may be clearly discerned in the following reflections on the "short service" system :—

"We have for some years adopted the 'short service' system. It is a Continental system. It has many disadvantages. Troops raised under it suffer from youth, want of training, and lack of regimental associations. But on the Continent it has this one paramount recommendation—it provides enormous numbers. The whole active army is merely a machine for manufacturing soldiers quickly, and passing them into the reserves, to be stored until they are wanted.

. . . . . .

"We have adopted this system in all respects but one. We have got the poor quality without the great quantity. We have by the short service system increased our numbers a little, and decreased our standard a good deal. The reason that this system, which is so well adapted to Continental requirements, confers no advantages upon us is obvious. Our army is recruited by a voluntary system. Short service and conscription are inseparable. For this reason several stern soldiers advocate conscription. But many words will have to be spoken, many votes voted, and perhaps many blows struck before the British people would

submit to such an abridgment of their liberties, or such a drag upon their commerce. It will be time to make such sacrifices when the English Channel runs dry.

. . . . . .

"The experiment is dangerous, and it is also expensive. We continue to make it because the idea is still cherished that British armies will one day again play a part in Continental war. When the people of the United Kingdom are foolish enough to allow their little army to be ground to fragments between Continental myriads, they will deserve all the misfortunes that will inevitably come upon them." [1]

It is this power to throw technical criticism into such lively and picturesque language, this power of holding the interest and touching the imagination, which makes the political orator.

Even in the earliest of his letters the political instinct obtrudes itself. He peers into the roots and causes of things. He is beset with "obstinate questionings" which his first impulse is to smother, but which later he gives free vent to. The steady growth and development of his political

[1] *The Story of the Malakand Field Force*, pp. 296-299.

ideals is clearly marked. The first boyish zest for military glory soon gives place to a broad and deep humanity. In his letters on the Malakand operations he has not yet found himself. Victory, prestige, conquest, annexation, seem the most glorious things in the world. He avoids with a conscious effort all questions of ethics. If here and there doubts assail him he dismisses them into the convenient limbo of *choses jugées*. "We have crossed the Rubicon."[1] It is no time to argue the justice of a quarrel with a wild tribesman when he has his rifle sighted on the rock behind which we are lying. He takes up his narrative on the basis of the *status quo*. The dominant fact of the situation is that we are at war and that it is our business to kill as many of the other side as possible. If anything, he tends to exaggerate his bloodthirstiness; he is keen on slaughter, he jibes at "philanthropists," he applauds village burning with an aggressive zeal.

But even so it is interesting to observe that his intellectual honesty will not allow

[1] *The Story of the Malakand Field Force*, p. 310.

LIEUTENANT WINSTON S. CHURCHILL
Attached to 21st Lancers

him to be deceived by the sophisms of glib politicians. He refuses to take refuge behind the euphemisms: "so many villages were visited and punished," or "the fortifications were demolished." He has to the full degree the courage of his convictions:—

"I do not believe in all this circumlocution. The lack of confidence in the good sense of the British democracy which the Indian Government displays is one of its least admirable characteristics."

A year later, by which time he has written his second book, *The River War*, he has come to recognise that "glory" and "prestige" cannot be accepted as ends in themselves. He has conceived the meaning of "Policy." He is no longer content to take the situation for granted, but will test all things by definite ideals and principles.

There were two episodes in *The River War* on which he spoke out in vigorous condemnation, displaying all those qualities of independence and courage which have since characterised his political action. One was the killing of the wounded after the battle of Omdurman, and the other was the desecra-

tion of the Mahdi's tomb and the dismemberment of his body.

On the occasion of the battle on the Atbara the Sirdar had issued orders that the wounded were to be spared, but at Omdurman no such orders were issued.

"I must personally record that there was a very general impression that the fewer the prisoners the greater would be the satisfaction of the commander . . . The unmeasured terms in which the Dervishes had been described in the newspapers, and the idea which had been laboriously circulated, of 'avenging Gordon,' had inflamed their (the soldiers') passions, and had led them to believe that it was quite correct to regard their enemy as vermin—unfit to live. The result was that there were many wounded Dervishes killed.[1]"

The affair of the "Mahdi's Head" gave rise to a Parliamentary debate, and outside the House the voice of the young subaltern was heard condemning not only the victorious general who was responsible for the outrage but also the Government which endorsed it.

After the capture of Omdurman the Mahdi's tomb was, by orders of Sir H.

[1] *The River War*, vol. ii. p. 195.

Kitchener, "profaned and razed to the ground." The body was dug up, the head cut off and carried away as a "trophy," and the body and limbs flung into the Nile. The attempted justification of this act was that it was necessary to destroy absolutely the last relics of the belief of the natives in the power of the dead prophet—that if the tomb remained intact it would be a centre and rallying point of sedition and revolt. We have always with us a school which believes that in order to impress savages we have got to become savages ourselves. "I shall not hesitate," said Churchill, "to declare that to destroy what was sacred and holy to them was a wicked act, of which the true Christian, no less than the philosopher, must express his abhorrence."[1]

Churchill had the humanity, the imagination, and the insight to respect his enemy, and these qualities are the essentials of statesmanship. In the Mahdi he beheld "the most remarkable Mohammedan of modern times, and one of the most famous Africans the world has yet seen."[2] He

[1] *The River War*, vol. ii. p. 214. [2] *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 115.

was a man of noble character, a priest, a soldier and a patriot. His tomb was associated with the highest instincts and the noblest motives of the people whom he rescued from the oppressive despotism of "the Turks."

To how many Englishmen has it occurred to institute a parallel between General Gordon and the Mahdi? Churchill's point of view is summed up in the fact that he found them fundamentally men of the same type.

Throughout these letters, too, there are hints of the coming democrat. He observes that "Imperial races are displayed, stinted and starved for the sake of an expensive Imperialism which they can only enjoy if they are well fed."[1] His "Imperialism" is not that of a ruling caste, but of a self-governing democracy. Like charity, it must begin at home. Jingoism—even when "Exeter Hall" is its mouth-piece—he discards. That the war was waged to "avenge General Gordon" he will not allow. "General Gordon was killed in fair war."[2] We shall hear more of these traits later.

[1] *The River War*, vol. i. p. 18. [2] *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 393.

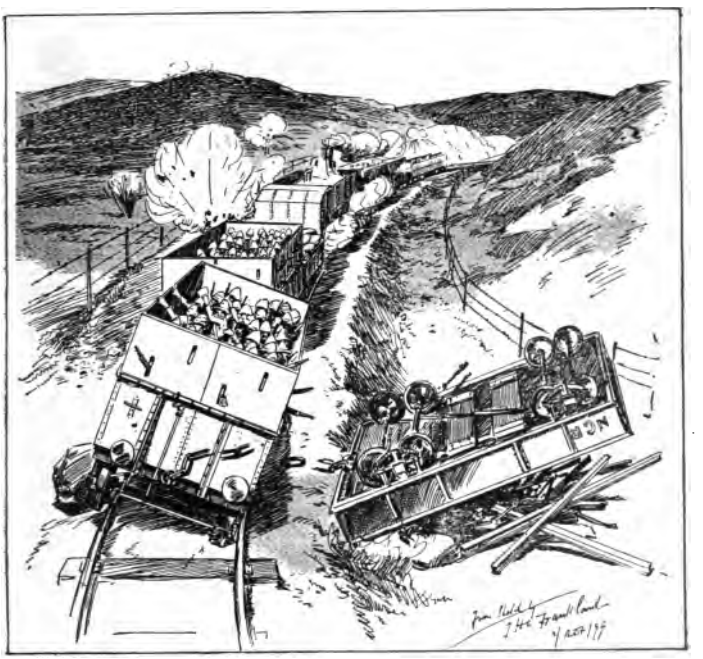
"All great men are ambitious in their youth," says Winston, apropos of the Mahdi. It was an old head on young shoulders which added the words, "in their youth." Winston is in his youth, and he does not disguise his ambition. A passion to lead and to excel shines through everything he has written. The words in which General Gordon expressed his hope of a blessed immortality might well serve as the motto with which Winston Spencer Churchill sets out upon his public career. "I hope that death will set me free from pain, and that great armies will be given me, and that I shall have vast cities under my command."[1]

[1] *The River War*, vol. i. p. 90.

CHAPTER III

THE BRIGHT EYES OF DANGER

IT was his adventures in the Boer War which firmly established Winston Spencer Churchill as a popular hero of the British public. Africa, which has been the grave of so many reputations, proved a cradle for his. As a knight of the pen he won more glory and *éclat* than any of the soldiers. From the day he sailed with Sir Redvers Buller to the Cape to the day he returned to Oldham to win a seat in Parliament he lived the most crowded year of joyous life that ever man enjoyed. From one hair's-breadth escape he plunged into another in continuous and breathless succession. Within a fortnight of his landing he was a prisoner in the hands of the Boers, after an exploit which endeared him to all lovers of courage and chivalry. A month later the world was ringing with the news of his dramatic escape out of the very



THE ARMOURED TRAIN DISASTER

A sketch by Mr. T. H. C. Frankland, an officer in the Train, forwarded by Mr. Churchill from the States School Prison at Pretoria to the Editor of *The Graphic* with the comment: "The enclosed sketch seems to me to be a very accurate presentation of what actually occurred."

fortress of the enemy. He was on Spion Kop at the moment of supreme defeat. He took part in the complicated series of engagements whereby Sir Redvers Buller's last mighty effort to break through the Boer lines was crowned with success, and he rode with Lord Dundonald among the first of the relieving column into Ladysmith. Again, he marched with Ian Hamilton, on Lord Roberts' right flank, in the great dash for Johannesburg and Pretoria, narrowly escaping a second capture on the way. On 5th June he had the felicity of announcing their release to his late fellow-prisoners at Johannesburg. On the 1st of October he captured a seat in Parliament after a contest which was one of the liveliest in the General Election.

Not even the German Emperor or President Roosevelt ever achieved a more exciting and strenuous year.

A leader writer in the *Daily News*[1] gave very happy expression to the interest which the public at home took in these adventures :—

[1] 28th December 1899.

"There is something quite Elizabethan about Mr Winston Churchill. His combination of brilliant literary gifts and the love of adventure for its own sake links him with many of the typical spirits of an age which has so much in common with our own. Carlyle has told us that a man cannot be expected both to act his romance and to write it. Mr Churchill, however, has reconciled these two functions.... There can be no doubt that he has fallen upon days which are extremely to his liking. The last news we had of him previously to his capture by the Boers represented him as leaving the train he had helped to rescue, and striking into the open, rifle in hand, with the object, apparently, of engaging the entire Boer army. Having made his escape from Pretoria, he is now off to the front again. Churchill seems to bear a charmed life, and we sincerely hope no aprosopoleptic[1] bullet will interrupt what promises to be a most brilliant and picturesque career."

On the occasion of his triumphal arrival at Oldham a witty paragraphist in *The Star*

[1] "'Aprosopoleptic' is a fearful wild-fowl, and we thought it better to ask the consulting scholar of Balliol to this office to spend a night in meditation upon its probable signification. He gives it as his opinion that an aprosopoleptic bullet is one that does not hit you in front."—*Pall Mall Gazette*, 29th December 1899.

suggested that "Oldham appears to be in some doubt as to whether it was Lord Roberts, Mr Winston Churchill or Bill Adams who took Pretoria."

It is not necessary to retell here the history of the Boer War. When Churchill landed with Sir Redvers Buller the tide of invasion was rolling down over Natal. Ladysmith was isolated, and Pietermaritzburg was threatened. The whole British plan of campaign was altered. Sir Redvers hurried to Natal and commenced his long, dogged attempt to relieve Ladysmith. Colenso, where the railway crosses the Tugela River, had already been evacuated by the British garrison, and our front was now at Estcourt. Cautiously along the railway line, between Estcourt and Colenso, "the armoured train" ventured forth on its hazardous scouting expeditions.

When the armoured train steamed out of Estcourt, on Tuesday, 14th November, under the command of Captain Haldane, Winston Spencer Churchill, war correspondent, contrived to accompany it. The train reached Chieveley Station, and then, parties

of Boers having been observed, started to return homewards. But it was too late. Already the enemy had occupied a hill, with two large guns, a Maxim, and riflemen commanding the line. As the train rounded a corner they opened fire. The driver put on full steam and attempted to run the gauntlet. But the Boers had left nothing to chance. A huge stone blocked the line at a point where the range had been carefully noted. The train crashed heavily into the obstacle, the shock hurling the foremost trucks over the embankment and jamming one across the track in front of the engine. The rest of the train kept the metals, but it was unable to proceed, caught like a rat in a trap.

"We were not long left in the comparative peace and safety of a railway accident." From the circling hills the Boers poured down a murderous fire. "The antiquated toy" of a gun carried on the train was soon smashed by a shell and put out of action. The "armour" was pierced like paper by any direct bullet.

In this crisis the war correspondent took his place in the fighting line. After a rough

inspection Churchill concluded that there was a chance of clearing the line, and it was agreed that while he directed the attempt, Captain Haldane should endeavour to check the enemy's artillery fire as much as possible with musketry.

Mr J. B. Atkins, the correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, who had set out from Estcourt to meet the returning train, gathered the following particulars from the dozen fugitives who escaped the final disaster :—

"Gradually we pieced the story together. We heard how Churchill had walked round and round the wreckage while the bullets were spitting against the iron walls, and had called for volunteers to free the engine; how he had said, 'Keep cool, men;' and again, 'This will be interesting for my paper' (the *Morning Post*); and again, how, when the engine-driver was grazed on the head and was about to escape, he had jumped in to help him and had said, 'No man is hit twice on the same day.'"[1]

Under the pitiless fire, "among these clanging, rending iron boxes," the truck partially on the rails was first of all uncoupled from that which had been thrown completely

[1] *The Relief of Ladysmith*, by J. B. Atkins, p. 74.

off, and then, with the help of strong shoulders, and a push from the engine, it gradually heeled over and was thrown clear of the line. The way of escape seemed opened up, but alas, though the tender was able to pass, the engine was six inches wider and could not pass the corner of the newly overturned truck. Every attempt to proceed jammed the obstruction tighter. Pulling backwards promised better results, but just as success seemed about to be achieved the coupling-chain parted. A few inches of footboard intervened between surrender and safety. All this for seventy minutes by the clock.

The only thing left to do was to charge the obstruction with more steam. There was a grinding crash, a stagger, a check, a tear, and the engine shot past, breaking the coupling-links and leaving the other trucks on the rail on the wrong side. By this time the men were becoming demoralised. The attempt to drag the trucks up to the engine under fire was abandoned and it was resolved to be content with saving the locomotive. It steamed homewards carrying as many of the wounded

THE ATTACK ON THE ARMOURED TRAIN

as possible, and those left behind proceeded to make for shelter with the idea of holding out till reinforcements arrived. Then another "miserable incident!" Some wounded private, wholly unauthorised, hoisted a pocket-handkerchief in token of surrender. There was a moment of indecision and bewilderment, and next moment the remnant of the force were prisoners of war.

Meantime Churchill, who had been directing operations from the engine had been carried on some 500 yards from the scene of the conflict. Near the shelter where it had been resolved to hold out he jumped off and marched back, rifle in hand, to rally the men as they arrived. Knowing nothing of the "white flag incident," he marched back into the trap and in a few minutes he was "herded with the other prisoners in a miserable group."

The varied emotions of that first night of captivity have been described by the prisoner in passages which reach the highest level of journalistic achievement. He had as he said, "read much of the literature of this land of lies." He expected to find his

captors hard, cruel men, and was prepared to encounter taunts and indignities. It was "a great surprise" to find that he was treated with respect and consideration. With the surprise came a reaction. Few passages in the literature of the South African War have been more frequently quoted than the following :—

"What men they were, these Boers! I thought of them as I had seen them in the morning riding forward through the rain—thousands of independent riflemen, thinking for themselves, possessed of beautiful weapons, led with skill, living as they rode without commissariat or transport or ammunition column, moving like the wind, and supported by iron constitutions and a stern, hard Old Testament God who would surely smite the Amalekites hip and thigh. And then above the rainstorm that beat loudly on the corrugated iron, I heard the sound of a chaunt. The Boers were singing their evening psalm, and the menacing notes—more full of indignant war than love—struck a chill into my heart, so that I thought after all that the war was unjust, that the Boers were better men than we, that Heaven was against us, that Ladysmith, Mafeking and Kimberley would fall, that the Estcourt garrison would perish,

that foreign powers would intervene, that we should lose South Africa, and that that would be the beginning of the end. So for the time I despaired of the Empire, nor was it till the morning sun—all the brighter after the rain-storms, all the warmer after the chills—struck in through the windows that things reassumed their true colours and proportions." [1]

"How unhappy is that poor man who loses his liberty!" It was "like the cheek" of Master Winston to demand his release on the ground that he was a "special correspondent." It was as natural that the Boers should refuse to release so very warlike a correspondent. For a month he fretted his soul at Pretoria, cooped up with sixty British officers in the States Model Schools, fenced in and guarded by armed sentries. What were chess, cards, cigarettes, rounders to those who sat by the waters of Babylon while their hearts were far away with the relieving column which never seemed to get any nearer. The captives drank deep of the bitter draft of hope deferred that maketh the heart sick. Characteristically enough Churchill's two chief recreations were argu-

[1] *London to Ladysmith*, p. 108.

ing with his captors and reading Mill's *Essay on Liberty*. "They all talked at once at the end, especially Churchill," says one of his fellow-prisoners[1] with reference to one of these wordy wars. After his escape Mill was removed from the library as an inflammatory author.

From the hour of his capture Churchill's mind revolved and rejected numberless plans of escape. Between Chieveley and Pretoria the vigilance of the guards prevented three forlorn attempts. Arrived at Pretoria, it seemed at first as if he were going to be housed with the "common soldiers" on the ground that he was "not an officer." The thought flashed through his mind "that perhaps with 2000 prisoners something some day might be done." But it was finally determined to treat the fighting war correspondent as an officer. There was also the golden bullet which, it is said, can beat down the strongest castle, tower, or town; but "the bribery market in the Transvaal had been spoiled by the millionaires."

But a plan was formed, and the plan, as

[1] Lieut. H. Frankland, Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

SCALING THE PRISON WALL

full of risks as a tight-rope walk across Niagara, was successful. By a minuteness of observation worthy of Sherlock Holmes it was discovered that while the sentries walked their beats there was one moment, one fortunate combination of time and place, when the glare of the electric light in the darkness prevented them from seeing the top of a few yards of the wall. With a comrade Churchill resolved to seize that moment and to trust to his planet for the rest.

The breathless moment came—and passed. Churchill had succeeded; his friend had failed to take advantage of it. The sentries had become suspicious, and it did not come again. The friend was in prison—and safe. Churchill was free and in the greatest danger in which he had ever been in his life. He was a fugitive and an outlaw in the city and in the land of his enemies.

He found himself in a garden, and as he crouched in the shadow of the wall people walked so close that it seemed as if the piston beats of his heart would betray him. There were sentries outside as well as in,

and they had still to be passed; the streets were full of suspicious eyes, and there were 300 weary miles to be traversed before safety was reached.

Is there such a thing as luck? Has fortune her favourites as well as her scapegoats? One cannot but think so as one contemplates the miraculous and incredible coincidences and series of happy chances which make the careers of some men. If Churchill had lived in ancient times he would certainly have had his demon or familiar spirit. At certain moments he seems to act with the reckless certainty of a man possessed, even as at other times he seems to write and speak with the calm assumption of authority and inspiration. Mr Stead has discovered that he has a "mystic" side to his character, "inherited heaven knows from what ancestor." But it is the "practical mystic," as Lord Rosebery would say. Having provided to the best of his ability for every contingency, he is prepared to risk everything else and to draw comfort from the stars—from Orion in especial which had guided him

to safety once before when lost in the desert.

> "He either fears his fate too much,
> Or his deserts are small,
> Who fears to put it to the touch
> To win or lose at all."

"I said to myself, 'Toujours de l'audace,' put my hat on my head, strode into the middle of the garden, walked past the windows of the house without any attempt at concealment, and so went through the gate and turned to the left. I passed the sentry at less than five yards. Most of them knew me by sight. Whether he looked at me or not I do not know, for I never turned my head. But after walking a hundred yards and hearing no challenge, I knew that the second obstacle had been surmounted. I was at large in Pretoria."[1]

But how to reach the frontier? How to reach Delagoa Bay? How to guide his footsteps on the way? He "formed a plan." He prospected about till he struck the railway. At the very least it could point him out the way, at the best he might board a train in the night and ride passage free.

The plan succeeded again. He scrambled

[1] *London to Ladysmith*, p. 189.

into a goods waggon and slept through the night in a nook among the sacks while he was being carried away from Pretoria. Before daybreak he landed, and concealed himself in a wooded ravine, with a gigantic and gurgling and ominously interested vulture for companion. The long day with its horror of thirst passed, but he did not succeed in boarding another train that night. He that cannot ride must walk. He struck forward through bogs and swamps and dew-dripping, waist-high grass, circling round whenever he detected any signs of habitation. Four slabs of chocolate are a poor basis on which to march 300 miles, especially when a man has been weakened by imprisonment. He stumbled on, half-fainting by the way, and presently he reached the end of his tether. Worn out and dead beat he saw ahead the lights of a mining station, and he resolved once more to play the gallant with Fortune.

Having concocted an ingenious tale to the effect that he was a Boer who had fallen from a train while skylarking, he approached a door and knocked. The long, long arm

BOARDING THE GOODS TRAIN

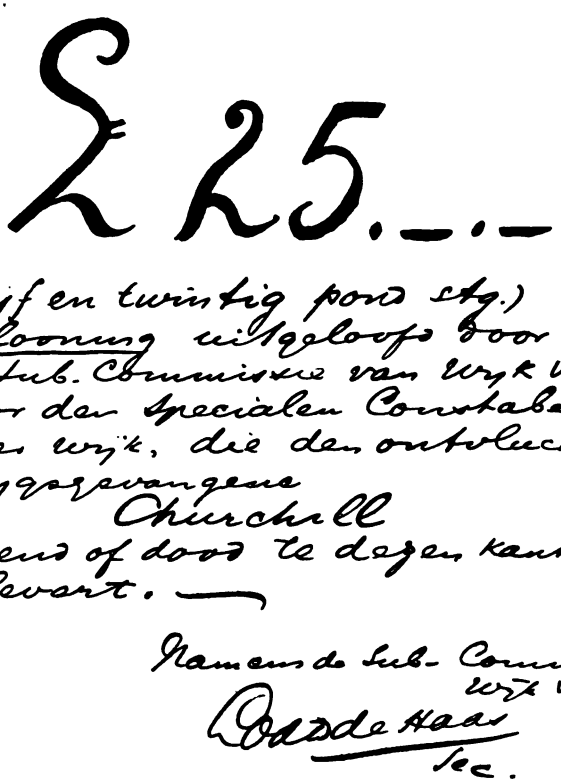
of coincidence reached down and placed an Englishman there to open it to him; and another Englishman, an Oldham man, from the constituency he had just contested, to welcome him. The door was locked, and the fugitive owned up. He was lowered into the mine, where he remained hidden for several days in the pony stable, visited by armies of white rats with pink eyes. At long last he was packed up and sent to the sea as "wool."

After two and a half days' travelling and shunting and lying in sidings, a weary wight crawled forth from a truck at Delagoa Bay, dirty, hungry and cramped, but happy as any mortal had ever been, and inquired for the British Consul.

"Thereafter everything smiled." It was the first bit of undiluted triumph over the Boers, and the Colonial public let itself go. Churchill was the hero of the hour, a part he was fitted to play to perfection. Even without his *naïf* confession, we can well believe that he enjoyed it extremely. But he had little time for dalliance. On the very night of his arrival he left Delagoa Bay for

Durban, whence, after an hour's wild welcome, he proceeded through Pietermaritzburg to the front. The third day found him back at Chieveley, from which a month before he had steamed out on the armoured train. His "circular tour" had not been of the kind that "Cook" conducts.

Churchill's other adventures in South Africa have already been outlined. The actions at Acton Homes, Venter's Spruit, Hussar Hill, Cingolo, Monte Cristo, the battles of Spion Kop, Vaal Krantz and Pieters, the operations round Dewetsdorp, the passage of the Sand River, the engagements of Johannesburg and Diamond Hill, and the capture of Pretoria, at all of which he was present, belong to the history of the war. It will be interesting now to consider the development of his political instinct and ideals in the midst of these thrilling experiences.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THE ORIGINAL PROCLAMATION POSTED ON THE GOVERNMENT HOUSE, PRETORIA, ON THE ESCAPE OF MR. CHURCHILL

Translation:

£25

(Twenty-five Pounds stg.) REWARD is offered by the Sub-Commission of the Fifth Division, on behalf of the Special Constable of the said division, to anyone who brings the escaped prisoner of war

CHURCHILL,

dead or alive, to this office.

For the Sub-Commission of the Fifth Division,
(Signed) LODK. DE HAAS, Sec.

CHAPTER IV

THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR

THE series of letters which Winston Churchill wrote from South Africa to the *Morning Post* rank among the very highest achievements of war correspondence. As a whole, they touch the high-water mark of journalism. Individually, several of them attain a dignity of style, a bold simplicity of outline, a measured, rolling eloquence of diction, which stamp them as literature. These impetuous compositions, dashed off in a fine frenzy in the train, in the camp, or on the field, excel, in all the qualities of literature, most of the leisurely and comfortable productions of the study. The literary power of which his previous work had given abundant indications had now ripened and matured in tropic luxuriance.

All the best qualities of his style had developed and strengthened. The range of his intellectual powers had increased with experience. The judgments were broader

and more tolerant; the criticisms were more temperate and statesmanlike; the courage and the independence were as notable as ever, but they were tempered and restrained by a sense of responsibility. The war correspondent wrote with the *aplomb* of a Cabinet Minister.

Not the least delightful quality of these letters is their *naïf*, candid egoism. He is irritated at the constant references to his youth. Of his captor he states, "his manner impressed me." He is always "equal to further argument" with his guards. Observing General Ian Hamilton calmly surveying a critical manœuvre he remarks, "Indeed, I could almost imagine myself the General, and the General the Press Correspondent," a fancy which is capped by the reflection that "perhaps" this arrangement would not have worked so well. These are the traits with regard to which the cavilling critic delights to dip his pen in irony and sarcasm. Hence the sobriquet of "Pushful, the Younger." Hence the epithets, "cocky," "bumptious," and "swelled head." To parody a famous retort, I had rather be the

light-hearted boy who was guilty of these indiscretions than the spiteful critic who remembered them against him.

It is very evident that the author has great joy in the fact that he is Winston Spencer Churchill, and his joy is contagious. He is more than content to be himself, and his high spirits and his light-heartedness are communicated to the reader. His fresh and vigorous intelligence is unstaled by custom and unwearied by routine. His eyes bring with them the wonder of childhood and the glory of imagination. To read him is to be young again.

Winston Churchill's views upon the merits of the war when he sailed to South Africa were those of the average healthy-minded Englishman. For him the Boer Ultimatum had been the sword which cut the Gordian knot of many misgivings as to the nature and conduct of British diplomacy. "Wrong in plenty there has been on both sides, but latterly more on theirs than on ours; and the result is war."[1]

In a speech delivered to his constituents at

[1] *London to Ladysmith*, p. 233.

Oldham, two years after the commencement of the war, he gave the following epigrammatic description of his views. "He was nearly a peace-at-any-price man up to the time of the declaration of war. After that he was a victory-at-any-price man."[1]

The Boers had rashly abandoned diplomacy, appealing to the dread arbitrament of war, and the immediate duty of every Briton was to repel invasion from British soil. "We sought no goldfields, we sought no territory." We did not even talk of annexation. The franchise, "equal rights for all white men," and the rescue of the natives from slavery and oppression were in themselves no mean ideals, and many a gallant and honourable soldier laid down his life for them. If they have not been realised, if sordid ambitions and ignoble aims have triumphed, the blame rests not with the soldiers but with the politicians.

Lord Randolph Churchill's speeches and writings have been the political text-book of his son, and it is certain that during the enforced leisure of the voyage to South

[1] Oldham, 7th October 1901.

Africa—"a fortnight is a large slice out of the nineteenth century"—he meditated often and earnestly upon his father's recantation of his views with regard to Mr Gladstone's settlement after Majuba. At the time of the settlement in 1881 Lord Randolph was one of its bitterest opponents. Ten years later he made a tour through South Africa, and in his letters he remarks that, "better and more precise information, combined with cool reflection," had led him to alter his views. He realised that any other settlement might have meant the loss of Cape Colony to the Empire, and he professed himself "free to confess and without reluctance to admit that the English escaped from a wretched and discreditable muddle, not without hurt and damage, but probably in the best possible manner."[1]

Winston held his own view, and it differed from his father's. He regarded the settlement as "a ghastly blunder perpetrated by the Liberal Party," but the cry of "Avenge Majuba"—like that other cry of "Exeter-Hall Jingoism," "Avenge Gordon"—made no appeal to him. There was nothing to

[1] *Men, Mines and Animals in South Africa*, chap. ii.

avenge in Majuba; it was a fair fight, and the "ghastly blunder," if blunder it was, was a deliberate act of policy on the part of this country.

Churchill had, as he says, "read much of the literature of this land of lies," and he went out with a very highly-coloured idea of Boer character. They had been represented as low, cunning, treacherous, lying, dirty, cruel, overbearing ruffians, and such he expected to find them. As a prisoner in their hands he found occasion to discard these travesties. Without relaxing his views as to the merits of the quarrel, he found that his country's enemies were men worthy of his honour and respect—"simple valiant burghers" fighting for a country they loved and a cause they believed in. If there was corruption and tyranny to be found in some of the Transvaal officials, it was matched by the cupidity and rapacity of many of those who claimed the protection of the British flag.

Here is a stern picture, full of insight and imagination:—

"By the rock under which he had fought

lay the Field-Cornet of Heilbronn, Mr de Mentz, a grey-haired man of over sixty years, with firm aquiline features and a short beard. The stony face was grimly calm, but it bore the stamp of unalterable resolve; the look of a man who had thought it all out, and was quite certain that his cause was just, and such as a sober citizen might give his life for."[1]

There are other pictures as notable of the dash and daring and fortitude of British privates and officers, of Buller unshaken by disaster, of Ian Hamilton, gallant and chivalrous, of Lord Roberts, the long-enduring veteran, sinking private grief in public duty.

Seeing with an impartial eye nobility, courage, and patriotism on both sides, he was none the less quick to discern the baser passions on whichever side they appeared. He notes the corruption of the office-seekers of Pretoria, and he is not blind to the cupidity of a large section of the Uitlander confraternity of Johannesburg—the "Helots" who found a refuge during the war at the Mount Nelson Hotel, Cape

[1] *London to Ladysmith*, p. 291.

Town. When at last the "Gold Reef City" broke upon his view, after weary months of hardship, after many a true heart had ceased to beat, it was "with an emotion of illogical anger" that he "scowled at the tall chimneys of the Rand."

As to the conduct of the war and the lessons, military and political, to be drawn from it, Churchill formed very definite and decided opinions. They are to be found scattered throughout his letters, and more particularly in the speeches which his parliamentary career has since given him an opportunity of making.

Seldom in history has a great nation entered upon a war with a lighter heart than did Great Britain enter upon the war with the two Dutch republics in October 1899. Seldom has a light heart received a ruder shock. The war was to last three months and to cost about £10,000,000. For nearly three years South Africa was convulsed in mortal agony at a cost of over £200,000,000 to the tax-payers of the United Kingdom. Dogged determination, enormous sacrifices, and a taxing of the

utmost resources were necessary before the dearly-bought victory was won.

Churchill never wavered in his support of what he believed to be the fundamental policy of the Government. He believed that the war was forced upon this country. At all material costs he was resolved to prosecute it to a successful issue. The settlement which he desired was one which would make it impossible for such a danger to threaten the Empire again. His Imperialism was that of a free, tolerant, and unaggressive empire, very different from the strident Jingoism which filled the country with clamour. His ideal was a noble one, and in his view it could only be promoted by noble and generous action. He has never held the pestilent doctrine that the end justifies the means. Mere physical force could never furnish a solution of the political difficulties, or pour oil into the wounds of war. The hand of the statesman was needed, guiding and directing the hand of the soldier. There was one price he was not prepared to pay for victory, and that was the altering of the fundamental character

of the British Empire, the lowering of his ideal.

By the end of the second year of the war Winston Churchill was in open rebellion against the leaders of his party. The autumn of 1901 he devoted to a vigorous campaign against the Government's conduct of the war. He announced that he had resolved "to indulge this autumn in the rare political luxury of saying exactly what he thought," and the first thing he had to say was rapped out roundly enough.

"For his part he supported their policy with confidence and even enthusiasm; but as to the means they were employing to carry out that policy, in that respect he had very little confidence and no enthusiasm."[1]

In October he made a tour round his constituency, delivering a series of addresses which attracted immediate attention, and which filled the party wire-pullers with consternation. With that audacious directness which is so characteristic of him, he addressed himself immediately to the two

[1] Constitutional Club, 12th November 1901.—*Times'* Report.

leaders. On them he fixed the responsibility which everyone seemed so anxious to avoid :—

"The country looks to Mr Balfour and Mr Chamberlain, the one the leader of the House of Commons and the apparent successor of Lord Salisbury; the other the *fons et origo* of the policy we are fighting for, and, as everyone knows, the most prominent member of the Government. I warn those two distinguished men, the main-guard of the Unionist party, that they cannot devolve the weight and burden of this tremendous enterprise—the greatest we have set our hands to since the times of Napoleon —upon any subordinate minister, or any particular department, but that it rests upon their shoulders, and that with its successful conclusion is bound up their political fame and their personal honour."[1]

The immediate cause of his kicking over the traces was the proclamation which had been issued in August, stating that every Boer leader who did not surrender by 15th September would be banished for life. Happily for the fair fame of our country,

[1] Mechanics' Institute, Uppermill, 4th October 1901. —*Manchester Guardian* Report.

this proclamation has been relegated to the oblivion of dead letters; but for a few weeks it represented the deliberate policy of our Government. In Churchill's words: "I do not think it either a very wise or brilliant move, and one likely materially to improve the chances of victory and peace in South Africa." He quoted with approval the caustic comment of another Conservative member, Major Seely:—"It is of much greater importance to catch the Boers who are fighting than it is to threaten what you will do to them when you have caught them." Apart from the actual terms of the proclamation, the dangerous feature was the misconception and miscalculation of the military situation by the Government. Within two months of the beginning of the war, immediately after his escape from Pretoria, he had done his best to warn both the Government and the people of the magnitude of the task before them. In a cable to the *Morning Post*,[1] which arm-chair experts pooh-poohed as hysterical, he said:—

[1] *Morning Post*, 9th December 1899 (2nd Edition).

"The individual Boer, mounted in suitable country, is worth from three to five regular soldiers. The power of modern rifles is so tremendous that frontal attacks must often be repulsed. The extraordinary mobility of the enemy protects his flanks. The only way of treating them is either to get men equal in character and intelligence, or, failing the individual, huge masses of troops. . . . There is plenty of room here for a quarter of a million men. . . . More irregular corps are wanted. Are the gentlemen of England all fox-hunting? Why not an English Light Horse?"

"Vigour, not rigour," was Churchill's maxim for the conduct of the war. At the time of the General Election the war had officially been announced to be "over." A year later it was raging as fiercely as ever. Even during the terrible week of Spion Kop "the embarrassments of the Empire never pressed upon us in a more insidious and dangerous form." At the beginning of the "third year of waste and sorrow" the Government policy had become one of "drift." Deeds, not threats, an overwhelming force and rapid blows, and an unstinted support of the generals in the field, formed the military

policy which he advocated with increasing pertinacity. More men, better equipment, greater mobility, were the burden of his cry. His suggestion that the Government should intervene "to localise and assign the functions of the Commander-in-Chief, so that he might be relieved of a multiplicity of duties he was unable to adequately discharge,"[1] was scouted at the time by Mr Walter Long as a "childish suggestion," but it was followed by the sending out of General Ian Hamilton to be Chief of Staff to Lord Kitchener. More troops and more horses found their way to the front during that autumn, and though Ministers professed the utmost contempt for their "candid friend," there can be no doubt that while the official opposition was paralysed by internal dissensions, Churchill played a most useful and patriotic part by his assumption of its derelict functions. He was a prophet with little honour in his own party, but the War Commission Report has since justified his insistent demands for the reorganisation of the Remount and the Intelligence Departments.

[1] Leicester: 23rd October 1901.

But it was in his political criticism that he displayed the most statesmanlike qualities of independence and courage. He was true to that instinct which a year previously had led him to denounce the slaying of the wounded Dervishes and the profanation of the Mahdi's tomb. Because he proved himself a jealous guardian of his country's honour, he has been denounced as a "popularity hunter," a "weather-cock," a "player to the gallery." Let the galled jade wince. These epithets are but the vicious and unreasoning kicks of the party hack. The man who lifted his voice in protest against the harsh and Draconian treatment of surrendered rebels, who derided the idea of waging successful war by means of proclamations of outlawry, who championed the "pro-Boer" journalist, Cartwright, when he was suffering from official persecution, and who refused to pin his faith to "unconditional surrender" as the only end of the war, was not only defying the leaders of his party; he was flying in the face of the vast and preponderating sentiment of the country. This was the

most unpopular course of any that he could have pursued. A little truculent denunciation of the enemy in the field, a violent attack upon anyone who presumed to question any detail of the policy of the Government, and Winston would have been not only a *persona grata* to the ministry, but the darling of the mob. If he had only set his mind to it, he could have done the Government log-rolling so much more effectively than such Ancient Pistols as Col. Kenyon Slaney or Mr J. W. Wanklyn. He chose the longer and more toilsome way. He sought to lead and to form, rather than to be the slave of and pander to, popular opinion. He elected to win the favour and the confidence of the people by speaking things which, though they were unpalatable for the moment, they gradually realised to be true and vital. And he had the ear of the people even in their moment of passion. He could not be brushed aside by the formula "pro-Boer." To those who taunted him, he had an effective retort. He was fighting the enemy in the field while they were "killing Kruger with their mouths."

Happy is the politician whose career can show so honourable an episode as Mr Winston Churchill's plea for clemency to surrendered rebels in the early stages of the war. As early as March 1900, his telegrams to the *Morning Post* deplored the vindictive and vengeful spirit which was being displayed. On military grounds the policy was bad, in that it tended to prolong and embitter resistance. On political grounds it was worse, because it inflamed race hatred and made the future settlement of the country a more difficult and heart-breaking task. This was no prophet prophesying smooth things to the public at home excited by a Jingo press, or to the "Loyalists" of Natal. In Natal he raised a storm about his ears, and at home the very paper whose representative he was, threw him overboard. But he was not to be silenced. He knew that his views were shared by many distinguished officers, including General Buller himself.

"It is strange that the soldiers in the field should hold more tolerant views than prevail at home. However, it is not, perhaps, the first time that victorious gladiators have been

surprised to see the thumbs turned down in the imperial box." [1]

With a dry irony and an absence of maudlin sentiment, he proceeds to argue his case.

"Why be such fools as to catch the Boer general's deserters for him? If I were President Kruger I should approve and rejoice exceedingly whenever I heard that surrendered rebels had been put into gaol. Indeed I should only ask that the Government should give no quarter to such treacherous creatures.

"Lastly, beware of driving men to desperation: even a cornered rat is dangerous. We desire a speedy peace, and the last thing we want is that this war should enter on a guerilla phase. Those who demand 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth' should ask themselves whether such barren spoils are worth five years' bloody partisan warfare.

"Peace and happiness can only come to South Africa through the union and concord of the Dutch and British races, who must for ever live side by side under the supremacy of Great Britain."

Before he entered the House of Commons Churchill had supported Mr Morley in his censure of the outrage on the Mahdi's

[1] *Morning Post*, 31st March 1900.

tomb. Inside the House he was again fated to follow the same leader. In April 1902 Mr Morley moved the adjournment of the House, in order to call attention to the case of Mr Cartwright, the editor of the *South African News*. In January 1901 the Dublin *Freeman's Journal* published a letter, purporting to come from a British officer, and containing a statement to the effect that Lord Kitchener had "sent secret instructions to the troops to take no prisoners." The chief parts of the letter were reprinted by the *Times*, and in this form reached South Africa. Mr Cartwright copied these extracts into the columns of his own paper, and on Lord Kitchener's denying the charges, he published the denial also. He was, however, indicted before an ordinary court in Cape Town for publishing a defamatory and seditious libel, was tried before a judge and jury, found guilty, and sentenced to one year's imprisonment. This, however, was not the question which was raised in Parliament. Mr Cartwright served his sentence and was released. The legal penalty

imposed upon him had been paid, and his offence was purged. He now proposed to return to England, partly on grounds of health, and partly because, his paper having been suppressed, he had no chance of earning his living as a journalist in South Africa. The military authorities unconditionally refused to allow him to leave the country. On these facts Mr Morley addressed a question to the Secretary of State for War (14th April 1902), and received what he called "the most outrageous and indefensible answer ever given within these walls since Simon de Montfort invented Parliament."

"It was not deemed desirable by the authorities in South Africa to increase the number of persons in this country who disseminated anti-British propaganda."

Mr Churchill supported the motion for adjournment as a protest against this violation of the liberty of the subject and the British constitution. It was a monstrous doctrine that the military authorities in South Africa should dictate who should be

free and what opinions might be expressed in England. Mr Cartwright had expiated one offence; if he committed another, let him be duly tried and sentenced if guilty.

"There were some of them on that side of the House who were not prepared to see a great constitutional principle violated, not, he thought, with any deliberate intent, but simply because those who administered the law had got used to an over-exercise of power."

With regard to the settlement to follow after the war, Churchill's views were sane and large-minded. Vengeance and retribution formed no part of his scheme. So far as he could, he would have deprived conquest of its sting, and done away with any suggestion of the heel of the conqueror. Ever present in his mind was the thought that after the war the two races must live side by side and eventually share the duties and responsibilities of government. We were fighting not to make bondmen, but fellow-citizens. For this reason he advocated a policy of conciliation and forbearance. He would even have endeavoured to retain in local office as landdrosts, field-cornets, and

such like, many of the same men as in the days of independence. The following words, spoken early in the war (Birmingham, 26th July 1900), have, unfortunately, too exact an application to the present situation.

"He could conceive no greater obstacle to the speedy settlement of South Africa than that it should pass under the authority of a brand-new English-speaking bureaucracy, out of touch with the great majority of the dwellers on the soil, and administering the government in a tongue not understanded of the people."

He saw neither prestige nor profit to be gained in the persistence in the demand for "unconditional surrender." What seemed a triumph to the politician was a barren victory to the statesman.

"He would like it to end in a handshake. The British flag would be stripped of half its glory if it flew only over a sullen and subjugated population, held down by the bayonets of a powerful army and a far-reaching system of police. He would like the war in South Africa to end under a compact—under an agreement—between the two most obstinate races that had ever come into collision, signed by responsible men on both

sides, which should mark at once the rights of the British Crown and the remaining rights of the Boer people."[1]

Such a compact—such terms of peace—would be "to the Boers a kind of Magna Charta, and to the British the title-deeds to the country." These are the words of no irresponsible free-lance, and of no reckless seeker after notoriety. They are inspired by the far-sighted vision of statesmanship; and the man who uttered them, isolated though he was from his own party, and from the official Opposition, was one to whom had been communicated the divine secret of leading men and governing their destinies. The sullen aloofness of the Boers, their almost perfect solidarity and cohesiveness, within the state and yet not of it, is one of the most dangerous factors in the present situation in South Africa, and bears witness to the justice of Churchill's contention. If only these views had been pressed by a united Opposition, the situation in South Africa might have been much happier than it is to-day.

[1] Address to the Bow and Bromley Conservative Association, 19th February 1902.

Time has already brought disillusionment, even to a politician so young as Winston Churchill. He has never abated one whit of his confidence in the justice of the motives which led him to support the war. But the sequence of events, the use which has been made of the dearly-bought victory, have caused him to doubt whether they were the same motives which inspired the real promoters of the war. There is not much of which he can be proud in the administration of the Transvaal and Orange River colonies to-day. The rights of white men have been equalised by levelling down instead of levelling up. The free Kaffir labourer has been supplanted by Chinese chattels, and Indian subjects of the British Crown suffer worse indignities than any they experienced under the "corrupt Boer oligarchy." He shares the views of the gallant Major Seely, who has stood back to back with him in many a stiff parliamentary fight.

"But if the most tangible and visible result of all the labours and sorrows of that prolonged struggle is to be the importation

of Chinese labourers, whose presence is so distasteful to the inhabitants of the Transvaal that they must needs be forced to work, with every circumstance of ignominy, in strict seclusion, and under conditions making them no better than slaves, it will seem that our labours have been in vain, and that it had been almost better had there been no war." [1]

In supporting Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's Amendment to the Finance Bill (16th May 1904), Churchill reluctantly owned that he was "tarred with responsibility" for acquiescing in an "immense public disaster."

[1] Major Seely, M.P. Letter to the *Times*. Dec. 1903.

CHAPTER V

MEMBER FOR OLDHAM

NEARLY twenty years ago a jolly paterfamilias used to take his boys out bathing on the beach at Dieppe. A school-fellow of theirs, a cheeky, cock-nosed little boy, rejoicing in the name of Winston, was also at Dieppe, and paterfamilias used to take him out with the others and "give the boys a good time." One morning, however, Master Winston did not appear, and on inquiries being made, one of the youngsters volunteered the statement, "Oh, Winston says he hears that you are one of those damned Radicals, and he's not going to come any more."

At the age of twenty-four Winston Spencer Churchill discovered that the army afforded too narrow a field for his ambitions. Already he was kicking against the pricks of service discipline. He was not content to be a mere

unit in a system, gradually achieving promotion along the well-trodden paths of official routine. He must needs be worrying his superior officers, making life a burden to the War Office officials, criticising, suggesting, advising. There were many murmurs in service circles at his combining the functions of soldier and war correspondent; and the candid nature of his comments, and the attention which they excited, did not help to allay hostility. His success as a correspondent precipitated a crisis, and he had to choose between the careers. He had already tasted the sweets of publicity, and of the power which comes of having the ear of the public. It is a great thing to command armies, but it is a greater thing to command the men who command armies.

On his return from the Nile Campaign in the autumn of 1898 he resigned his commission, and announced that it was his intention, like his father, to enter the political arena. Without delay he set to work to carry out his decision, and in October he inaugurated his political career by addressing two meetings, one at Rotherhithe and the other at

Dover. Naturally, these speeches were somewhat literary exercises, but yet, and in spite of the juvenile appearance of the orator, they made an impression, and it began to be whispered abroad that the mantle of Lord Randolph had descended upon his son. In December, under the title "Twentieth-Century Men: Some Peeps at Futurity," the *Daily Mail* published the prophetic article which has already been quoted, and which subsequent events have so amply justified.

The son of Lord Randolph Churchill, the founder of "Tory Democracy" and the Primrose League, and of Lady Randolph Churchill, the most brilliant of "Primrose Dames," had but to hint his willingness to the party-managers, and the first vacancy was his for the choosing. Fortune favoured him. He could not, if he had had the pick of all the constituencies, have found one more to his liking than Oldham. His father's maxim, "Trust the people," was his also, and in this great industrial constituency of the north, this spreading town which hummed like one vast factory, he was brought into direct touch with

that vast army of toilers whose collective votes sway the destinies of the Empire.

Oldham is a two-member constituency. In previous elections the swing of the pendulum had been very even and regular. In 1885 one seat was held by a Liberal and the other by a Conservative. In 1886 the Conservatives captured both seats, only to lose them both again in 1892. Again, in 1895, two Conservative candidates were returned, and they held the seat at the time when Churchill resolved to carve out a political career for himself. In June the death of Mr R. Ascroft necessitated a bye-election, and Mr J. F. Oswald, his colleague, seized the opportunity he had for some time been seeking to resign. This double election suddenly sprung upon the constituency, found the local Conservatives thoroughly disorganised and unprepared. A few months previously their registration offices had been closed for lack of funds. The Liberals, on the contrary, had been working hard for years. Mr Alfred Emmott, their senior candidate, was a local manufacturer, one of the largest local employers of labour, immensely popular, and an

active participant in municipal affairs. The other Liberal candidate was Mr W. Runciman, one of the young lions of the Eighty Club, and a member of a great shipping family. For some time past the Conservative party had been doing badly in the bye-elections, and the Liberal candidates, young, active, full of fight, and both men of first-class ability, were just the men to wrest Oldham from their unready opponents. The Conservatives, taken at a disadvantage, and knowing that the swing of the pendulum was due, were in a mood for compromise. They were said to be willing to divide the representation in order to avoid a contest, but the Liberals, flushed with the anticipation of victory, would listen to no suggestion of the sort.

Then it was that Winston Churchill stepped upon the scene, and, in the words of the correspondent of the London *Chronicle*, "Depression quickly gave way to feverish activity." It was the opportunity he sought for, a working-class constituency, a "ding-dong fight," and the eyes of the country focussed upon himself in this his first contest. Like an arrow from a drawn bow he sped to Oldham. He

was closeted with the Caucus, and a summons was issued for a general meeting of the party on the following night. The announcement of the candidates was a double-barrelled sensation, both for that meeting and for the country. Mr Winston Churchill, the "scion of England's world-famous aristocracy," was coupled with Mr James Mawdsley, one of the ablest and most justly popular leaders of Lancashire Trade Unionism. The Tory Democrat and the Tory Socialist!

James Mawdsley, the Secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Operative Spinners, was one of the dominant personalities in the Trade Union movement. In Imperial politics he called himself a Conservative, but on social and domestic questions his politics were of the most advanced order. As a member of the Royal Commission on Labour he had signed, along with Tom Mann, a Minority Report, advocating the nationalisation of "such industries as can conveniently be managed socially," the regulation of the remainder, the taxation of rent and unearned incomes, and the enforcement of a maximum working-day. What other Conservative

candidate would have found it possible to run in such harness? Winston Churchill, however, was but following the path along which his inclinations, his enthusiasms, his ambitions and his genius led him. His Conservatism, too, was limited by the word "Imperial." The Conservatism was but the guinea stamp, the metal was democrat, or "demagogue," as his enemies spelled it. Not glory and prestige, not excursions and alarms, not foreign politics and empire-building, but the well-being of the people, social amelioration, and the provision for the aged poor, were the themes of his address. He regarded, he said, the improvement of the condition of the British people as the main end of modern government, and that sentence from his first election address remains the cardinal article of his political faith.

"Mr Churchill has apparently derived his political ideas from Mr Disraeli's novels," observed a leader writer in the *Daily News*. Mr Stead, moreover, has discovered in him a reincarnation of Coningsby—"Coningsby in his youth, Coningsby in his ambition, Coningsby to a certain extent in his personal

appearance." It was inevitable that spectators should compare this romantic figure, which had suddenly strutted upon the political stage, with that other ardent and fantastic youth who had obtruded himself upon an older generation. Winston Churchill had already published a political novel. *Savrola*, a revolutionary tale, had been written in 1897, and had appeared in serial form in *Macmillan's Magazine*. It was a blend of Disraeli and Anthony Hope, full of political reflection and barricade fighting. The hero, Savrola, was a popular leader, who, by his courage and self-sacrifice, saved the republic of "Laurania" from a *coup d'état* premeditated by a president of the Louis Napoleon type. In the hero it is easy to recognise the projected shadow of the young author. "Vehement, high and daring, was his cast of mind." Of noble birth, he led the Radical party of Laurania. He hated "militarism," and when he spoke winged words to the people it was not of foreign adventures and waving banners, but of "social and financial reform." It was "Savrola" Churchill who stepped upon the hustings at Oldham.

Churchill's first electoral campaign was a failure of the same kind as Disraeli's first speech in the House of Commons. With all his dash and pluck he was a novice in this kind of warfare. His manner was described as "artificial and theatrical," his speeches as "rhetorical, rather pompous essays." These critics, however, were the Opposition press, and it was their business to find fault. Even they admitted that he showed a marvellous faculty for adapting himself to the situation. Every day of the fight he advanced in tactics and strategy. If he made a mistake once, he never made it again. If he missed fire the first time, he did not curse his weapon, but coolly took fresh aim and blazed away again. What he lacked in knowledge and experience he made up in candour and audacity. He rushed in where angels—if "old parliamentary hands" may be so designated—feared to tread. Who but Winston Spencer Churchill would dream of telling a grave and learned deputation, who waited upon him to ascertain his views on the currency question, that he was still a very young man, and that he had not

made up his mind on the question of bimetallism?

The election took place on 6th July, with the following result:—

Emmott,	12,976
Runciman,	12,770
Churchill,	11,477
Mawdsley,	11,449

Churchill took his defeat like a sportsman. His confidence was not dashed by his first defeat. He had not stopped the "flowing tide," but he had learned many things, and, like a born electioneerer, he had enjoyed the fight for its own sake. He shook hands with his victorious rivals, and as he said good-bye to Mr Runciman he added, "I don't think the world has heard the last of either of us." Disraeli might have said it.

In less than six months not only England but the civilised world was ringing with the name of Winston Spencer Churchill. His exploit on the armour train, his capture by the Boers, his escape, his war correspondence, provided the public with a constant stream of sensational adventures. The most thrilling situations of fiction were outdone when Win-

ston took to acting his own romance. Hitherto the war had produced nothing but disappointments and disillusionments. The British public wanted a hero badly, and when it found one, there were no bounds to its ecstasy. Winston returned home exactly a year after his defeat to find himself the most lionised man in England.

The wheel of fortune came round full turn. The announcement of the General Election shortly after his return afforded him an opportunity of fighting the old battle over again under circumstances wholly favourable. It was no longer he who sought a constituency, the constituencies sought him. Before the General Election he had refused eleven invitations to become a candidate. But pride impelled him to return to the old battle-field.

He made an almost royal progress to Oldham. The party leaders met him at the station; cheering crowds lined the streets; the procession of carriages was accompanied by two brass bands playing "See the Conquering Hero Comes." Oldham had sent its share of reservists to the front. Many of them had been brought into personal con-

tact with him, and some had written home enthusiastic accounts of his prowess. It was an Oldham man, too, who had helped him to escape, and Oldham enjoyed a sense of personal proprietorship in the national hero. His triumph was assured from the day he walked back from the escaping engine into the hands of the Boers, and a happy mother called her baby "Winston Spencer Bradbury," after the man who had saved its father's and her husband's life.

Much as he enjoyed the lionising, like a wise general he took nothing for granted. The aspirant to parliamentary honours would do well to give his days and his nights to the study of the files of the *Oldham Standard* which record his manifold activities from the time of the dissolution. During the election campaign he delivered in all 144 separate speeches, all of them fresh, vivid, and picturesque, some of them models of popular oratory. He fought the fight himself in all its details. He was master of the whole situation. He did not place himself in his agent's hands, but he took his agent in his. In the mornings he made himself familiar

with the details of committee and office routine, and received deputations. At midday he drove round the works and factories holding dinner-hour meetings. In the afternoon he went out canvassing, often accompanied by his distinguished mother, whose rare electioneering gift was of as great assistance to him as it had been to his father. In the evening he fired off his big guns in the shape of set speeches, full of well-mouthed rhetoric, crisp epigram, whimsical illustrations, and shrewd home-thrusts at his opponents.

Since his defeat a year before Churchill had learned how to use his strength. He was unmistakably an orator. His rhetoric, it is true, was still somewhat wild and luxuriant, his colours were somewhat violent, his effects were sometimes crude, but it was always the luxuriance, the violence, the crudity of strength, and not of weakness. All the elements of power were there. Time and culture would bring the grace and delicacy of the master artist, and meantime Oldham did not provide academic audiences.

In tone and gesture, form and substance, his speeches recalled his father. It almost

seemed as if Lord "Randy," in the heyday of his power, had taken the platform again. In the opening speech of the campaign Winston quoted his father's famous motto, announced before a Lancashire audience, "Trust the people." But it needed not this direct reference to carry the minds of his hearers back to the founder of "Tory Democracy." The following passage might have been spoken by Lord Randolph himself:—

"Mr Emmott, who evidently reads my speeches with attention, tells us that everything in the Radical garden is absolutely grand. He must be easily satisfied. For what is the condition of the Radical garden to-day. Never was there such a forlorn spectacle of mismanagement and confusion. Hardly a single flower will flourish there. The English rose, whether it be the red rose of Lancashire or the white rose of Yorkshire, grows smaller and weaker every year. Even the Scottish thistle cannot live in such uncongenial soil. The strong tree of Imperialism, springing up from among the primroses in the Unionist garden across the road, has put the Liberal garden in the shade. The Home Rule shamrock is withered and dead, although in the Unionist garden there has grown such a fine bed of that other kind

of shamrock, of courage and loyalty, that gallant Irish soldiers love to wear. The poor temperance plant, that I cannot help thinking would do much better if, instead of being in any party's garden, it were grown on the public common, comes to nothing year after year. The ugly Socialist plant, which the English climate does not want, has run to seed. Nothing thrives and prospers in the Radical garden except the sour apples of discord and the stinging nettles of personal envy. There was one, a Grand Old Radical Gardener, who could not only grow any flower in the world to order, but could change their colours after they were grown. But he is dead and has taken his secret with him. And of the gardeners that remain, the upper ones do nothing but fight among themselves, and pull up each other's plants; and the under gardeners, instead of looking after their own garden, go and throw stones at other people's. And the customers, who find no flowers to buy, are all going away in disgust, and the British electors are cutting off the water at the main, and would then tell one they are going to give up the garden altogether, and use the ground for building a large lunatic asylum." [1]

Overwrought, perhaps, with more than a whiff of the midnight oil in it; but it served

[1] Oldham, 19th August 1900.—*Oldham Standard* Report.

its purpose—it amused and interested a popular audience, it conveyed an intelligible criticism of the disorganised Liberal party, and it provided a tag whereby that criticism was carried away in the memories of all those present.

An American journalist, the late Mr Julian Ralph, in the course of a series of articles on the most conspicuous "Fighters in the Election," has given the following picture [1] of the senior Conservative candidate for Oldham as he then appeared:—

"Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill is twenty-six years old, with the mind of a far older man and the vitality and enthusiasm of a far younger one. He is a well-built man, above the average height, with very broad shoulders and the strong frame of his mother's people. But you have to forget and look away from his face in order to see his frame, for his face is of a highly nervous, wholly intellectual type. It does not need much to give it a strained and worn appearance, as if its youth was being prematurely dried out of it by the intense force at work behind it. Then he looks as a horse does when it is trained 'too fine'—perhaps 'bred

[1] *Daily Mail*, 2nd October 1900.

too finely' expresses it better. He has got what Americans call a 'postage-stamp face' —a term which will be understood by all who have seen that country's peculiar travelling gallery of tiny engravings—mainly made up of old-fashioned, strong-featured, smooth-shaven countenances dominated by commanding foreheads. Already Mr Churchill's head is carried with the droop which comes to those who read and study hard. When he is thinking he drops his head forward as if it were heavy. That is how you see him at one moment—a pose prophetic of what is too likely to fasten itself upon him before he reaches middle age.

"But it requires two plates to take a fair photograph of him, for the next time you look at him he has sprung to his feet with the eagerness of a boy, his pale blue eyes are sparkling, his lips are parted, his face is flushed, he is talking a vocal torrent, and his hands and arms are driving home his words."

It was the "Khaki Election," and Churchill, like the rest of his party, went to the country on the war issue. "For nearly a year," ran his address, "we have been fighting in a just, righteous, and inevitable quarrel with the Boers." If the electors endorsed that policy, were they going to hand over the

task of carrying out the settlement to the party which disbelieved in the justice of our cause? The issue was fairly put. The two questions cannot be separated, and if the Liberal party as a whole had been prepared with clear and definite answers, there would have been fewer complaints as to the "unfairness" of the "Khaki Election." But this was the very issue which the Liberal party, as an organisation, sought to avoid. It had "no settled convictions." (The cap is on the other head to-day.) It was split up into discordant and fratricidal sections and units, many of whom challenged boldly the policy of the war, while others endorsed the policy, but criticised the administration in its details.

Both Mr Emmott and Mr Runciman, the Liberal candidates at Oldham, belonged to the section which styled itself "Liberal Imperialist." They maintained the justice of the war, they denounced Kruger and renounced all sympathy with "Pro-Boers," and they even went so far as to attack the policy of their own party in 1881. The policy of the war, therefore, they claimed to be neutral ground, and they bitterly resented the issue

which was placed before the electors. Churchill was too keen a controversialist not to see his advantage, and too skilful a strategist not to use it. No "Pro-Boer" had a worse time of it than had the two "Liberal Imperialists" at Oldham. Far from attempting to identify them with views they abhorred, or to tar them with the "Pro-Boer" brush, Churchill took them at their word. His treatment of Liberal Imperialism was perfectly legitimate and fair, and displayed a masterly power of political sword-play.

"And so by one sweeping movement the whole of this vital issue, this burning question between political parties in England, this dispute which had convulsed the country, for which Sir Edward Clark and Commander Bethell have withdrawn from public life, was swept aside. Mr Emmott agrees with Mr Chamberlain and the Conservative party generally, that we were right to go to war, and that our cause is just. I do not say that Mr Emmott is insincere; every man has his nature. The strong oak is uprooted by the tempest, the smaller and more pliable trees bend before the fury of the storm. . . .

"Now I come to the vexed and much-debated question of the settlement after Majuba.

It has always been a point of honour with Liberals to defend this. . . . I am convinced that the surrender after Majuba was a ghastly blunder perpetrated by the Liberal party, to which much of our present grief and trouble has been due. And the senior Liberal member for Oldham fully agrees with me! Was I not justified in saying that this is a most peculiar state of things? Peculiar! Peculiar is not the word for it. 'Unheard of,' I should rather say. Have you ever heard of a newsboy calling out 'stale news'? Have you ever heard of a fisherman crying 'stinking fish'? I'll be bound you have not. Well, you now hear two Radical members come before their constituents saying, 'We are wrong; we admit it. Vote for us.' . . . It will be the choosing between turtle and mock-turtle! . . .

"The Liberal members have no policy of their own, and find no fault with our policy, except that they would like to carry it out. They entrench themselves behind criticism, not criticism of policy but criticism of detail."[1]

After the war "Social Reform" occupied the next place in the election address. He contended that the Liberal party, if returned to power, would repeat the "dreary farce" of their last administration. They would fritter

[1] Co-operative Hall, Oldham, 19th August 1900.

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away their time, tinkering at the constitution, introducing Home Rule Bills, or attacking the House of Lords, and nothing would be done to ameliorate the condition of the people. It is significant, this constant recurrence to and insistence upon social questions as the subject of paramount political importance. The address further pledged him to Army Reform in the direction of more encouragement to the Volunteers and the development of the strength of the Colonies for purposes of Imperial defence, to old-age pensions, the simplification of land transfer and the extension of the Workmen's Compensation Act to other trades.

While Winston was on the stage, his colleague, the other Conservative candidate, was eclipsed. The position of Mr Crisp was far from enviable and not without pathos. A man of individuality and ability, he lacked the gift of oratory, and the brutal public hardly troubled to disguise the fact that it regarded him as a lay figure. It was Winston the crowds came to see, and to hear, and to cheer. It was on Winston that the encomiums of the local orators were pronounced. Like a

bellows puffing up in the wake of a whirlwind, Mr Crisp laboured earnestly but ineffectually. He incurred the penalty of running in harness with genius.

It was a fight to the finish. The Liberal candidates, Messrs Emmott and Runciman, were as "game" as their dashing opponent, and they defended their seats with cool determination. The blunders of the war, the frequent criticisms of Government methods which Churchill had from time to time given utterance to, the unfulfilled promises of Mr Chamberlain's "social programme," provided them with excellent ammunition. They were foemen worthy of his steel, and the contest had a keener zest. But there was one thrust from which he winced—a stab in the back by anonymous slanderers. Both Mr Emmott and Mr Runciman are to be absolved from any complicity in, or even knowledge of the matter. There are, however, in the back-stairs of politics, in both parties, certain low fellows of the baser sort, who have more or less direct interests in the return of particular candidates, and who do not scruple to soil their hands with dirty

work. Whatever their origin, a number of discrediting rumours and mean calumnies were passed into circulation and whispered from ear to ear. It was said that during the election Winston was habitually drunk, that he had quarrelled with his colleague, Mr Crisp, and struck him in the face, that he was a physical coward and had left the army because he was afraid of fighting, that he had been drummed out for insubordination, and many other tales of an equally cruel and unfounded description.

The imputation against his courage touched him to the quick as no other charge could have done. Vainly he endeavoured to run his traducers to earth. The insinuation met him at heckling time at his meetings in the shape of some such question as—"Why did ye quit soldiering?" or "Why did you go out to South Africa as a correspondent and not as a soldier?" But when he attempted to stamp upon it, behold, there was nothing substantial. He wrote to the press, inviting Messrs Emmott and Runciman to denounce publicly "such vile, scurrilous, and miserable means." Finally he placarded the constitu-

encies with the following letter from Sir Evelyn Wood, Adjutant-General to the Forces:—

"DEAR MR CHURCHILL,—In reply to your letter of yesterday's date, asking me to state the conditions under which you left the Service, I have the pleasure to remind you that I advised you not to abandon the military service in order to take up politics.

"You ask a further question, 'Could I have gone out on duty after leaving the Service?' The answer is, that you embarked for South Africa on the 14th October, and the first Reserve officers were invited to rejoin on the 28th December 1899.

"We discouraged officers going out on their own account.

"I may add that the officer who was in command of the armoured train which was captured by the Boers, with all its occupants, reported highly on the decision and marked courage which you showed on that occasion, when at his request you assumed temporarily the position of an officer.—Yours sincerely,

"EVELYN WOOD."

The incident would not be worth this detailed notice, were it not for the fact that the slanders found a wider circulation than in Oldham. A lie, once started on its career,

is not easy to overtake. The stories may still be heard in smoking-rooms, for the young man who shoulders his way to the front so rapidly has many enemies.

The election took place on 1st October, and, amid the wildest excitement, the result was announced as follows :—

Emmott . . .	12,947
Churchill . . .	12,931
Runciman . . .	12,709
Crisp . . .	12,522

Churchill had wrested back a seat from the Liberals. It was the most popular victory in the Election. Telegrams of congratulation poured in upon him from everywhere, as if he were a party-leader instead of a youth who had just won his spurs. He began to experience the penalties of fame. Captain Middleton, the Chief Agent of the Conservative party, wired :— "Congratulate you heartily. Have you any spare evenings? Many applications for help." Half the candidates in England were clamouring for his assistance. Had he as many heads as the Hydra, he could not have made all the speeches that were demanded of him. During

the next fortnight he traversed the country from north to south and from east to west, and when he took his seat at the opening of Parliament, he was already a man with a political reputation and a following in the country. Influence in the country is the one and only stepping-stone to power in the House of Commons, and from the day he crossed its threshold, Winston Churchill was marked for leadership.

CHAPTER VI

THE TATTERED FLAG

IN the political history of the past century we have to go back to the early careers of Disraeli and Gladstone to find a parallel to the rapid rise of Winston Churchill to a position of parliamentary power and national importance. At the age of twenty-six he entered Parliament, after a contest which was one of the most conspicuous episodes in a General Election of unusual importance. Up to within a year of his entering Parliament, he had never made a public speech. He entered the House of Commons, a political tyro, under the full lime-light of public interest and private jealousy. In his first session he rose in his place to challenge the principal measure introduced by his own party-leaders—Mr Brodrick's Army Scheme —and delivered a speech which placed him at a bound in the front rank of parliamentary

orators. From that day people began to speak of him as a future Prime Minister.

In his third session he was revealed as a party-leader in a party crisis for which we have to go back to the repeal of the Corn Laws for an adequate parallel. He took up the challenge, and sustained, unshaken, the attack of the most formidable political gladiator of the time. The great battle between Protection and Free Trade is rapidly resolving itself into a dramatic personal struggle between Joseph Chamberlain and Winston Churchill. Defeated in the Conservative party, he retired with all the honours of war, to be enthusiastically welcomed by the Liberal party, which has already, through the quickening influence of his inspiration and example, become a more formidable fighting organisation than it has been for twenty years past. Within four years of his entering Parliament, he has become a dauntless and resourceful party-leader. The next General Election will show whether he can make himself a national leader. For his ambition leads him towards no meaner destiny.

On 1st October 1900, Churchill was re-

turned member of Parliament for Oldham. The next fortnight he spent rushing about the country electioneering on behalf of other candidates. A week later, at the Annual Dinner of the Pall Mall Club, he delivered a speech in defence of the British officers at the front, which led to a heated controversy with Lord Rosslyn, whose book, *Twice Captured*, gave currency to offensive charges. Churchill's style of attack was what is called "slashing," and perhaps he was more merciless than was necessary. On 30th October he delivered his famous lecture on "The War as I saw It," before a large, fashionable, and distinguished audience in the St James's Hall. Lord Wolseley presided over the assemblage of Dukes, Generals, and Rothschilds. In this lecture he gave for the first time the full account of his escape from Pretoria, which he had hitherto suppressed, out of considerations for the safety of others. Having to work for his living, he turned his adventures to profitable account by spending the next few months before the meeting of Parliament on a lecturing tour, in which he visited the most important cities in this country and in

the United States. From the war he came straight to a General Election campaign, and then, with hardly an interval, he was off on a lecturing tour over a hemisphere.

In his case, as in that of President Roosevelt, the strenuous life led to advertisement. It is one thing to arouse public interest for a single dramatic moment; it is quite another thing to retain that interest steadily over a long period of time. It is just this power of sustaining interest that Churchill possesses in a singular degree. After the General Election politics were forgotten for a time. But Winston was not forgotten. He was paragraphed, interviewed, reported, puffed and boomed to his heart's content. His self-advertisement was frank and unashamed. There was nothing mean or petty about it. His object in entering public life was to become a popular leader, and he set about it by adopting the most direct means of making himself known to the people. He invited their scrutiny and their confidence. From the beginning he had resolved that not Oldham but the United Kingdom should be his constituency.

When Churchill entered the House of Commons the two most engrossing subjects of public interest were the war and the reform of the Army system. The Government had staked its reputation upon speedily bringing the war to a satisfactory conclusion, and upon a thorough re-organisation of the Army, and these were just the two subjects with which Winston Churchill was popularly associated. He had seen more of war in general, and of this war in particular, than any other man in the House of Commons; he was a soldier, and he was known to hold pronounced and original views on the subject of Army Reform. It was to an audience interested and expectant in no common degree that he rose to make his maiden speech.

As it chanced, it was upon the conduct of the war. In the course of the debate on the Address (18th February 1901), Mr Lloyd George had made an attack upon the policy of wholesale farm-burning, which was then being ruthlessly carried out. In particular, he denounced a proclamation issued by General Bruce Hamilton to the following effect:—

"*Notice.*—The town of Ventersburg has been cleared of supplies and partly burned, and the farms in the vicinity destroyed on account of the frequent attacks on the railway in the neighbourhood. The Boer women and children who are left behind should apply to the Boer commandants for food, who will supply them, unless they wish to see them starve. No supplies will be sent from the railway to the town."

Churchill rose to reply, but his case was one which did not lend itself to effective advocacy. He studiously avoided the definite issue and confined himself to a general defence of the policy of the war. It was not a "war of greed," but a war for "the extension of the franchise." It had been, "on the whole, carried on with unusual humanity and generosity." In his view, the Government's policy "ought to be to make it easy and honourable for the Boers to surrender, and painful and perilous for them to continue in the field."

The speech was conspicuously moderate in tone, and made an agreeable impression on both sides of the House. On the "illimitable veldt" he had learned a different lesson from that which Mr Chamberlain subsequently

brought home. "If I were a Boer," he said, "I hope I should be fighting in the field." It was a breath of fresh, manly sentiment disturbing the mephitic vapours of Jingoism.

In the vivid series of descriptive sketches which he contributes to the *Daily News* under the heading, "Pictures in Parliament," Mr H. W. Massingham has described this maiden speech :—

"Address, accent, appearance, do not help him. But he has one quality—intellect. He has an eye—and he can judge and think for himself. Parts of the speech were faulty enough—there was clap-trap with the wisdom and insight. But such remarks as the impossibility of the country returning to prosperity under military government—the picture of the old Boers—more squires than peasants—ordered about by boy subalterns, the appeal for easy and honourable terms of surrender, showed that this young man has kept his critical faculty through the glamour of association with our arms. The tone was, on the whole, quiet, and through the speech ran, as I have said, the subdued but obvious plea for sympathy towards the foe."

A month later, the question of the recall and reduction of General Colville having been

raised, Churchill rose to support the action of the Government. The speech surprised his audience as much by its modesty of tone as it pleased them by its shrewd common-sense. He indulged in no recriminations against the gallant General whom misfortune had overtaken. Rather he dwelt upon the large element of chance in all military operations. Nor did he dispute the technical point raised by the Opposition, that the removal of General Colville had been irregularly carried out. Lord Roberts was in chief command, and so long as he was responsible for the efficiency of the Army, he must be trusted to exercise the principle of selection among his subordinates. He had long been an enthusiastic advocate of "selection" as the only satisfactory system of promotion for the Army, and the only hope of increased efficiency. This was hardly the line or tone of argument which members had anticipated, but it was a style which the House of Commons likes.

Mr Massingham notes the rapid advance in parliamentary manner and debating skill:—

"To their rescue came Mr Winston

Churchill, with what was certainly the ablest speech he has made since his entry into the House. I say 'ablest,' because it was a pure debating speech, conceived on lines of singular breadth, argued with great acuteness and closeness. . . . Nothing could be more remarkable than the way in which this youth has stepped into the parliamentary manner and has flung himself, as it were, straight into the mid-current of the thoughts and prejudices of the House of Commons. He chose on this occasion to act as the 'bonnet' of the Government—the man who should lead them out of a dangerous pass. And he did it to perfection. Mr Balfour showed his gratitude by vehement and repeated cheering, and there were points in his speech in which he had the applause of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and Sir Charles Dilke."

Early in March 1901 Mr Brodrick laid his ill-fated Army Reform Scheme before the House of Commons. His proposal was to organise a home army of six army corps, of whom three army corps, or 120,000 men, were to be ready to depart on foreign service at a moment's notice. It was an inflated and revolutionary scheme, vast in its projects and vague in its details. The speech in which it was announced was a brilliant performance,

but when the merited applause with which the orator was greeted died away, doubts and apprehensions began to suggest themselves to many of the most acute military critics. Mr Brodrick, however, retained the confidence of his party, and was backed up by a solid and unshaken majority.

Two months were allowed for consideration and discussion. To the horror and consternation of the Conservatives, the first direct challenge came from their own ranks—from their youngest and most promising recruit. It was a loud, clear, defiant challenge with a note of menace in it. The following notice of amendment appeared upon the papers of the House of Commons under the name of Mr Winston Churchill:—

"That this House, while fully recognising the necessity of providing adequately for Imperial defence and the plain need for extensive reforms in the organisation and system of the Army, nevertheless cannot view without grave apprehension the continual growth of purely military expenditure, which diverts the energies of the country from their natural commercial and naval development; and having regard to the extraordinary pressure

under which all connected with the War Office are now working, desires to postpone final decision on future military policy until calmer times."

The consternation was justified, for this amendment travelled far beyond the scope of Mr Brodrick's scheme. The *Times* had condemned the scheme from a military point of view, but Churchill reached beyond to a vaster issue. He not only criticised details; he challenged the whole conception of national policy which lay behind them. It was as if Lord Randolph Churchill had risen from the grave and answered with a voice, for this was the identical issue which had wrecked his career. He also had broken a lance against the monstrous growth of public expenditure which threatened to sap the resources of the nation, but he had gone under. On the threshold of his career his son essayed the same heroic task. "Mr Winston Churchill," said the *Times*, formally washing its hands of him, "repeats again the most disastrous mistake of his father's career." It is, however, evident by this time that the *Times* had misjudged both the temper and the capacity of the son.

Churchill's amendment had to give way to that moved by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the Leader of the Opposition, condemning the Government scheme on the ground that its proposals "are in many respects not adapted to the special wants of the Empire, and largely increase the burdens of the nation, without adding substantially to its military strength." In the discussion aroused by this amendment Churchill delivered a speech which forms a landmark in the history of that Parliament. Immature as the speech was in parts, it was rich in all the qualities of noble and moving oratory; it glowed with conviction, and it kindled enthusiasm; at one moment it strung the audience to a high pitch of dramatic tension; it revealed a powerful and original intelligence at work, a rare courage, a resolute and imperious will, and it proclaimed a new leader of men.

The matter of the speech will be dealt with in another chapter; it is sufficient here to trace the rapid growth of his influence in the House. Mr W. H. Massingham, the most picturesque and impressionable political journalist of to-day, has described the occasion in

one of the most memorable of his "Pictures in Parliament."

"To him [Sir Charles Dilke] succeeded the main interest of the discussion—Mr Churchill's speech. It had one leading feature, which it at once developed, and which, I was going to say, distinguished it above everything that one hears nowadays on the green benches and on either side of the House—singular and striking parliamentary courage. You could see how distasteful it was to the Government—how Mr Balfour's lips drew down in grave disapproval—how the narrow and timid, highly-trained intelligence drew back from the free working of the broad, courageous, keen young mind, with its mingled rashness and wisdom. I have heard Mr Churchill deliver one better speech in the House, but none that gave the same promise of power. Unequal as it was in style, now youthful and abrupt, now again rising to singular heights of eloquence, true precision of thought, even depth of feeling, it never failed to show the independent politician, who means to make his will and mind prevail. . . .

"The speech was an uncompromising—a most daring—challenge to the predominant spirit. And it was not its least interesting feature that it was an avowed revival of his father's crusade for economy in the public service—the crusade in which Lord Randolph

fell to rise no more. Amid a deep and sympathetic silence Mr Churchill read out the memorable letter in which Lord Randolph pleaded for a more rational scale of expenditure. 'I raise the tattered flag again,' said the young man, lifting for a moment his face, redeemed from plainness by its bright, ardent eyes.

"I shall not attempt to describe the speech. Its threads were not, of course, woven with the skill that comes of long practice, and here and there were missing stitches. But in its elevation of purpose, its broad conception of national policy, and in the noble and delicate movement of its closing sentences, I recall nothing like it since Mr Gladstone died. And I will make two criticisms upon it. The first is that it is the speech that should long ago have been delivered from our own benches. The second is that, in the years to come, its author should be Prime Minister—I hope Liberal Prime Minister—of England."

When the division was taken upon Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's amendment, Churchill and several other Unionists walked out of the House to avoid voting in support of a resolution moved by the Leader of the Opposition. But the working of our party system was admirably revealed when the

House divided on Mr Brodrick's original resolution. On every hand one heard expressions of distrust as to the provisions of the scheme, but, as the only Unionist who dared to vote against it, Winston Churchill occupied a position of splendid isolation.

For the next two years Churchill fought the fight of retrenchment and Army Reform with a vigour and resource, and with a success that amazed old parliamentary hands. In his first session he had taken a stand on fundamental principles, and thenceforward in the public mind he was identified with a "cause." The autumn of that year was devoted to a campaign against the methods which were being adopted in the South African War, and the tendency of the Government to rely on rigour rather than vigour. This oratorical crusade has been described in another chapter. It was the first of a brilliant and effective series to which he devoted his restless energy during each parliamentary recess. It did not serve to make him any more popular with his own party.

The next landmark in his career—they follow with bewildering frequency—was a

speech which he delivered on 12th October of the same year at the Constitutional Club, of all places. In opening a discussion on "The Future Policy of the Unionist Party," he recommended to an incredulous audience the adoption of the old Radical programme of "Peace, Retrenchment and Reform." In the mind of the young Tory Democrat these three lines of policy were inextricably intervolved. There was but one stable basis for the constitution, a prosperous and contented community at home. War bred grave disorder in the body politic. Extravagant finance imposed grievous burdens on the people. The absence of reasonable reforms to match social and industrial developments created a festering sore at the very heart of the Empire. In his view, the only sound Conservative policy was to seek peace, to husband national resources and to anticipate by wise measures of reform the blind fury of revolution. Unfortunately, the movement of the Conservative party was in quite another direction. Its heart was wholly set upon military glory, Imperial expansion and the maintenance of class interests. Thencefor-

ward the Tory Democrat and his party pursued diverging lines.

In his speech upon the Budget in April 1902, Churchill inaugurated a well-planned and splendidly-executed parliamentary campaign against the reckless increase of expenditure which had marked the whole career of the Government since it originally came into office in 1895. The Budget which had just been laid before the House provided for a total normal expenditure—that is, exclusive of all special war charges—of one hundred and twenty-nine millions sterling, representing an increase of thirty-five millions in eight years. This increase had been chiefly incurred in the two great spending departments, the Army and the Navy, whose joint annual expenditure—apart from the war—had risen from thirty-five and a half to sixty-one millions. In 1886 Lord Randolph Churchill had resigned the Chancellorship of the Exchequer rather than consent to the estimates which were laid before him for the two Services, and which together amounted to thirty-one millions. The Budget of 1902 provided twenty-nine and a half millions sterling for

the Army and thirty-one millions sterling for the Navy. In a smaller proportion, but in an equally alarming degree, the other departments were increasing their demands. There are limits to the total amount which can be raised by taxation. A burst of trade prosperity had to some extent masked the grievous nature of the burden, but the lean years and the evil hour of reaction, as Churchill foresaw, were approaching.

Already, to quote his words, "The £200,000,000 Budget looms portentous in the future." The natural growth of industry and commerce could never keep pace with this frightful geometrical progression. The revenue would lose its elasticity, and fresh taxation would be necessary. Under this accumulating burden of taxation, our industries would be heavily handicapped in competition with those of more fortunate lands. The imposition of further fresh taxation meant "broadening the basis of taxation," a euphemism for the taxation of bread and meat and the necessities of life. And that, said Mr Churchill, is going to raise two gigantic issues—the Fair Trade issue, and

something even more serious—the Social issue.

The Fair Trade Issue! Already by a sure instinct he divined the great campaign of Mr Chamberlain, more than a year before the *dénouement* at Birmingham. Looking back from where we stand to-day, not three years after, the following passage would almost seem to have been inspired, so accurate is its prophecy, so vivid and so true its vision of the future:—

"I wonder, sir, what will happen in this country if the Fair Trade issue is boldly raised by some responsible person of eminence and authority. We shall find ourselves once again on an old battle-field. Around will be the broken weapons, the grass-grown trenches and neglected graves — reviving former memories—and party bitterness, such as this generation has not known. How is it going to split existing political organisations—now so artificially serene? These are the questions of the future; but, sir, when I think of this Budget, I would say of the near future, and when they arise, they will have to be answered by timid men as well as by bold men."

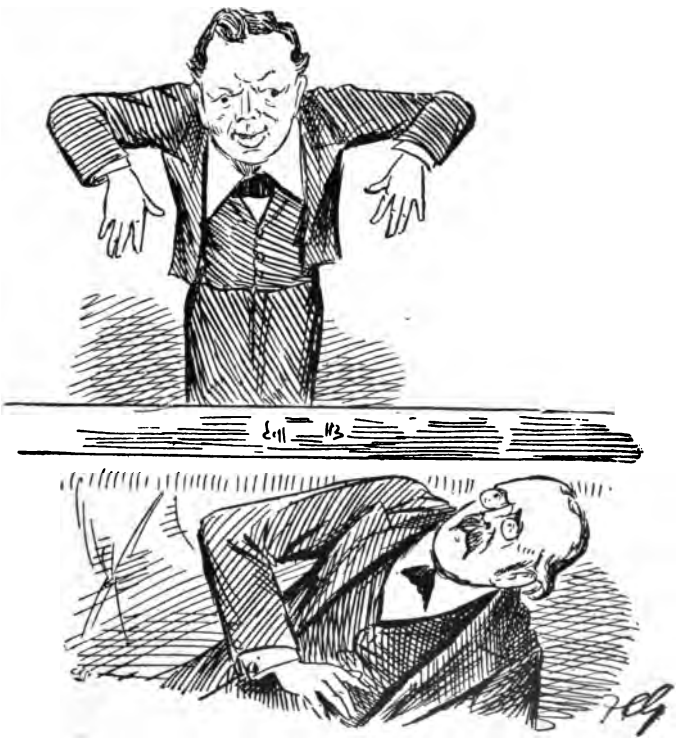
In the first place, Churchill challenged the

wisdom of our total annual expenditure. In the second place he proposed the practical and statesmanlike issue: How best can we distribute among the various departments the amount which we can afford to spend? There is, he maintained, no effective direction of expenditure as between the departments, no attempt to control and curb some that others may be developed to greater profit, nor indeed any machinery or force capable of such a work. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is but solitary, while the heads of the Spending Departments are many, as Lord Randolph Churchill proved too well. Within a few days of his speech Churchill had given formal notice of motion for a select committee "to consider and report whether the present method of controlling and allocating expenditure in and between the various public departments was the best that could be devised."

Mr Balfour, on being appealed to, refused to give the slightest countenance to this motion, or to afford an opportunity of discussing the general question of expenditure on the second reading of the Finance Bill before any amendment dealing with a specific

tax came on. The growth of expenditure, he maintained, was wholly due to deliberate policy, and not to any laxity in the supervision of expenditure. There was no way to reduce expenditure other than by a reversal of policy. But Churchill refused to be silenced or overawed. He returned to the subject with dogged persistence. He pursued ministers at question time. The terms of his motion were so innocent, and its object so obviously salutary, that gradually the obstinate refusal of the Government to consent to any inquiry began to create a bad impression. After all, what harm could a committee do? It could not reverse a deliberately accepted policy. It is often an expedient, but it is never a popular course to shun inquiry. Mr Balfour hesitated, weakened, and finally ungraciously yielded. Churchill won his first parliamentary victory, and sowed the seeds of a bitter personal feud with Mr Balfour.

When Churchill gave notice of his amendment to Mr Brodrick's Army Reform Scheme resolution in April 1901, the *Times* discharged its thunders at his head and denounced his motion as "a very mischievous and wrong-



MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL AND MR. BALFOUR

Mr. Balfour: "Confound that Boy! He's always doing something weird!"

(Westminster Gazette, Feb., 1902)

headed proposal." Nothing daunted, Churchill was the sole member of the Unionist party who voted with the Opposition. The scheme was adopted by a huge majority of 142, and Mr Brodrick was given a free hand and an open purse with which to reorganise the British Army. For two years he was allowed to work his will, but it was evident that he had undertaken a task beyond his power—beyond the power, indeed, of any man. His scheme was unsound in principle and incoherent in detail. It made vast demands, but provided inadequate means for carrying them out. It aimed at reconstructing our Army on a continental scale under conditions that were strictly insular. Behind it lay the *arrière-pensée* of conscription, as Mr Brodrick not obscurely hinted in his opening speech. Conscription alone could have insured the success of the scheme, but he lacked the courage and the confidence to demand it. Month by month he laboured in his bureau, overwhelmed with detail, inventing new caps, filling pigeonholes with the staffs of unformed battalions; but with all his efforts it remained a paper scheme. The men were not forthcoming to

give body to the six army corps. Generals were appointed, but they had no men to command. "The Phantom" Army Corps became the butt of every wag in the country. The undersized, weedy youths who were enlisted as "specials," in the hope that by careful training they might be raised to the very low Army standard, were popularly known in Army circles as "Brodricks."[1] Still Mr Brodrick toiled on at his Sisyphean task, a pathetic spectacle, a stubborn and headstrong man, hopelessly entangled in the toils.

In January 1903 Churchill judged that the time was ripe for a supreme effort against this Reform Scheme, which he described as a "total, costly, ghastly failure," "a humbug and a sham." Two years before he had opposed it as wrong in theory and in principle. With two years' experience he was prepared to maintain that it was a failure in practice. Mr Brodrick himself, unbending and uncon-

[1] After Mr Brodrick had been transferred to the India Office a weak-minded sergeant committed suicide and left papers showing that having to wear "the Brodrick cap" had preyed upon his mind. So great was the odium attaching to this unfortunate cap, that Mr Brodrick has been moved to issue a formal denial that he personally had anything to do with its invention.

vinced, was the real obstacle, and Churchill resolved to concentrate all his energies, all his power of keen analysis and destructive criticisms, in an attack upon the administration of Mr Brodrick. On 17th January he delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Oldham Primrose League the opening speech of a new campaign which was to last throughout the coming session. It was a scathing indictment of Mr Brodrick's theory and practice of reform, a direct frontal attack, which carried by storm all the ramparts of bureaucratic make-believe behind which he was entrenched. The speech created a profound sensation, and its immediate effect was to crystallise the growing body of public opinion hostile to Mr Brodrick.

An ally appeared from an unexpected quarter. Four days after the Oldham speech the *Times* commenced publishing a brilliant series of articles on "The Problem of the Army," the authorship of which has since been acknowledged by Mr L. S. Amery, the editor of *The "Times" History of the War in South Africa.* They attracted widespread attention, and they secured the almost universal approval of experts. Their conclusions were

backed up by the whole weight of the *Times'* authority and influence. In substance they attacked Mr Brodrick's scheme on the same grounds of principle on which Churchill had taken his stand two years before.

On 12th February Churchill followed up his Oldham speech by another at Wallsend. It was a sweeping exposure of "The Great English Fraud," as he termed the scheme. The six army corps took the place of the "Phantom millions" in the "Humbert safe." Mr Brodrick was subjected to a stream of merciless ridicule, and the nation was convulsed with laughter.

With the opening of the new session the campaign was transferred to the House of Commons. For some time previously rumours had circulated in the press as to the formation of a party of young Conservatives, under the leadership of Winston Churchill. The names of Mr Ivor Guest, Mr Ian Malcolm, and Mr Bromley Davenport were associated with this movement, the object of which was to maintain an organised parliamentary campaign against Mr Brodrick's Army Scheme. Whether by previous ar-

A HUMBERT PATENT

Disrespectful Boy: "It's all rot! There's nothing inside."

"He had felt convinced that the great French fraud at which we had been amused was merely a poor, wretched, private concern compared to the great English fraud which the War Office was perpetrating every day."—*Mr. Winston Churchill at Wallsend, February 12th*, 1903.

(*Westminster Gazette, Feb.*, 1903)

rangement or not, a compact and vigorous party soon disclosed itself. Issue was joined forthwith upon the Address. Mr Ernest Beckett, who, as the friend of Lord Randolph Churchill, had advocated retrenchment in military expenditure while Winston was still a mischievous schoolboy, moved an amendment to the Address, couched in terms almost identical with those of the resolution which Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had moved to Mr Brodrick's scheme two years before. It was seconded by Major Seely, and gave rise to a discussion, lasting over two days, which was described by Mr Asquith, and endorsed by the *Times*, as "a landmark in the history of our administrative policy."

I must draw again upon the *Daily News*, from Mr Massingham's "Pictures in Parliament," for a description of the impression made by Churchill's speech in support of the "Beckett Amendment."

"The feature of the debate has been Mr Winston Churchill's speech. It was much the most successful, the most broadly conceived, and the most brilliantly executed of his parliamentary efforts. The argument was more composed and continuous, the parliamentary style more finished than usual,

and the speaker's great gifts—his vivacity, insight, and power of realising and illuminating a subject—were largely developed. The speech held the House throughout, and its quality showed that this young man, who is the real author and organiser of the Reform movement, and who alone among his following said this year what he said two years ago, is shaping rapidly for power."

On the division the Government majority was 116, which was in itself a considerable reduction from the 142 by which Mr Brodrick's resolution had been carried two years before. But the real significance of the figures lay in the fact that had the Irish party voted as usual, with the Opposition, the majority would have fallen to fifty-six. Sixty Irish members, apprehensive as to the fate of the Irish Land Bill if the Government were reduced to such a pass, on what was practically a motion of no confidence, refrained from voting at all. Moreover, seventy Unionist members were absent unpaired, and Churchill had the crowning triumph of being accompanied into the lobby against the Government by seventeen other Unionist members.

The next step in the parliamentary game was to raise the question in Committee of Supply on the Military Estimates. On Vote A, fixing the land forces, Mr Ivor Guest, the Conservative member for Plymouth, and a cousin of Churchill, moved that the number of men provided for in the estimates be reduced by 27,000. In the two days' debate which resulted, the Government policy was subjected to a running fire of destructive criticism from an array of the brightest and most powerful intellects in the Tory party. On the division the majority was reduced to ninety-one, while the party of Unionists voting against the Government had risen to twenty-five. The Dissentients included Mr Yerburgh, Sir John E. Gorst, Lord Hugh Cecil, Mr Ivor Guest, Mr Churchill, Major Seely, Mr Ian Malcolm, Sir Edgar Vincent, Sir Gilbert Parker, Mr Claude Hay, and Sir J. Dickson-Poynder.

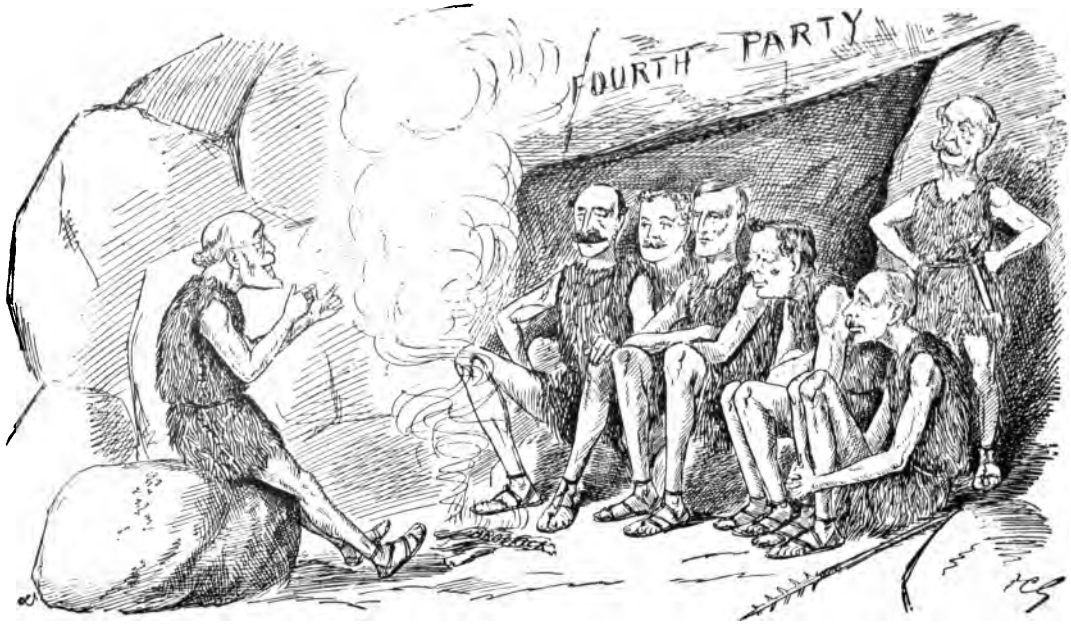
In a letter[1] to Mr Travis-Clegg, the Chairman of the Oldham Conservative and Liberal Unionist Association, Churchill gives an account of the formation of the group of

[1] The *Times*, 27th April 1903.

powerful critics who acted together throughout this session :—

"I felt it my duty last autumn to join with a number of Conservative and Liberal Unionist members, who, in company with Mr Ernest Beckett, the Conservative member for Whitby, had resolved to pay great attention to all Army questions, and to take common action in the cause of Army Reform. That Association, as I understand it,—and, of course, I speak only for myself,—is in its action limited to questions affecting the size and efficiency of the Army, to the finance connected therewith, and the expenditure necessitated thereby. Its immediate and definite object is to secure a substantial modification of Mr Brodrick's Army Scheme of 1901 in respect of organisation, numbers, and cost."

The game of Brodrick-baiting proceeded merrily. No opportunity was missed; every form of the House was adapted to the purposes of the guerilla war. "During a long experience of Parliament and acquaintance with the Conservative party," said Sir James Fergusson, M.P., addressing the editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, "I have never known an attack upon a Government



A LECTURE ON TACTICS

Primeval cave man lecturing to a "Fourth Party."

(Westminster Gazette, April, 1903)

The Lecturer is Sir John Gorst, the others represent (from left to right) Mr. Beckett, Mr. Ian Malcolm, Major Seely, Mr. Winston Churchill, Lord Hugh Cecil, and Mr. Gibson Bowles, some of the leading "Malcolmtents," as they were called.

so organised and pressed with so much bitterness and apparent determination by members elected to support it." They were popularly known as the "Malcolmtents," a punning reference to Mr Ian Malcolm's connection with the group, and to the allegation freely made by the Government "Old Guard," that disappointed ambition was at the root of the revolt. The remorseless manner in which the attack was pressed led to considerable heat. No critic was more constant, more alert, or more ingenious than Winston Churchill, and on him the fury and indignation of the "Old Guard" was concentrated. The *Daily Telegraph* opened its columns during the Easter recess to a rather unedifying correspondence on "Party Loyalty," in the course of which several gallant gentlemen lost their tempers badly, and gave occasion to the enemy to blaspheme. Churchill smiled and withheld his hand. It was the best gratis advertisement he had yet received.

On 15th May an event happened at Birmingham which upset many plans and disturbed many calculations. Mr Chamberlain

announced his policy of Fiscal Reform and Preferential Tariffs. An older electioneerer than Mr Winston Churchill intervened to shift the political centre of gravity. In the face of the "raging, tearing propaganda" of Birmingham, it was no longer possible to maintain Army Reform in the first place which for some months it had occupied in the public mind. Churchill entered upon a new stage of his career as the champion of Free Trade, and the antagonist of Mr Chamberlain, growing day by day in strength, until he matched his formidable rival. Henceforward economic, fiscal and commercial questions occupied the first place in his thoughts, and made the first claim upon his energy. The next year of his life was to be more arduous than any that preceded it.

The Government had weathered the divisions both upon the "Beckett" and the "Guest" amendments, but the work of the "Malcolmtents" was done. The confidence both of Parliament and of the country had been destroyed, and the great Army Reform Scheme had received a mortal blow. Its dying agonies lasted for a year. In October,

Mr Brodrick was transferred from the War Office to be Secretary of State for India, while he was succeeded as Secretary of State for War by Mr H. O. Arnold Forster. Next session the Budget announced a reduction in the Army estimates. Later, the abandonment of the Army Corps Scheme and the reduction of the regular forces was announced. In July 1904, Mr Arnold Forster produced a brand-new Army Scheme of his own, which, though vague as to details, was based upon those same general principles as to "organisation, numbers and cost," which Churchill had asserted in opposition to Mr Brodrick. The "reversal of policy deliberately adopted," which Mr Balfour had declared to be unthinkable, had been accomplished. Whether a policy so forced upon a Government and not adopted *con amore* is likely to be successfully carried out, is another matter.

CHAPTER VII

ARMY REFORM

WHEN Churchill entered the House of Commons the subject of most absorbing public interest, after the war, was the reform of our Army system. As one of the "Service members" the subject was of special interest to him, but it also happened that his whole previous experience and training had qualified him to speak with more than usual knowledge and authority on military questions. He had not only studied the art of war, he had practised it against savage and against civilised races. He had seen the great military machine tested in practice. He had seen victory, and he had known defeat. He knew the conditions of actual war which can only be guessed at by theorists in time of peace. And, if he had seen much, he had reflected more. It had been his business, as a newspaper correspondent, to describe and explain, and sometimes to criticise, the opera-

tions he had witnessed. He had formed many opinions, and where he had seen inefficiency and defects, his keen intellect, working along original lines, had suggested many novel devices to remedy old defects or to cope with new needs.

Many cogently expressed opinions on Army organisation and training are to be found scattered throughout his various volumes of letters from the front. Almost immediately after his return from South Africa, a speech which he delivered at Plymouth (17th August 1900) on the quality of the weapons with which our soldiers were armed against the Boers attracted considerable attention. Our Lee-Metford magazine rifle was inferior in many respects, in sighting and magazine mechanism, to the Mauser rifle of the Boers. As for artillery, our guns were easily outranged by the Boers'. "It ought not to have been reserved for a tribe of ignorant Dutchmen to point the way in technical matters to our highly-paid artillery specialists." Such an opening, of course, was not to be missed by the Liberals at Oldham, and during his election campaign next month

he had to run the fire of a charge of attacking the Government at Plymouth and defending it at Oldham. He stood to his guns, and the justification which he pleaded deserves to be quoted as illustrating the deliberation, foresight and confidence with which he had mapped out his parliamentary career.

"I believe in the necessity of some wide measure of Army Reform. I am a young man. I have had to find for myself a good deal in life. I had to look ahead. I saw that, perhaps, some day, I should be in Parliament—perhaps as the member for Oldham. I saw that probably a Bill would be brought forward dealing with Army Reform, and I felt that I should speak with more right and weight on this matter, about which I feel so strongly, if I had associated myself with the reform movement from its early days. If they think they can twist my words into an attack upon the Conservative Government, I will face that disadvantage, even though it cost me a few votes." [1]

Many novel suggestions were advanced in a lecture which he delivered at the Royal United Service Institution on 17th April 1901, General Sir Redvers Buller occupying

[1] Oldham, Co-operative Hall, 19th September 1900.

the chair. The appointment of "official" war correspondents, who would write letters under the general's supervision, would cope with some of the military dangers of modern newspaper enterprise. "Artillery snipers" might be used with embarrassing effect upon an enemy. An artillery commander supplied with "coloured shells" could indicate with rapidity and precision, by means of one gun, where he wished the fire of his batteries to be concentrated. If the position of each brigade and divisional commander were indicated by a marked balloon, much trouble and delay might be avoided in the delivery of important messages. Modern conditions had rendered the sword a "ridiculous anachronism" as a weapon for cavalry. Although there were 6000 cavalrymen in South Africa armed with the sword, he had only heard of one Boer being killed by that weapon. He was "in favour of throwing away all the ironmongery." Modern war was fought with firearms, and instead of teaching our infantry to ride, he would have our cavalry taught to shoot. The Boer war had rung the death-knell of "shock" cavalry tactics. They must learn to ride in a "loose swarm," and to trust

more to individual training, initiative, and intelligence. It was easy, of course, for the War Office pedant, with his text-books, to laugh at these suggestions, but there were others who recognised here, apart from the actual practical value of these suggestions, the authentic spirit of enterprise and innovation, which overcomes difficulties and wins battles.

Right from the beginning of his career Churchill steered clear of two rocks which are the Scylla and Charybdis of the military man who enters politics. He did not lose himself, like a pedant, in details, and his horizon was not bounded by his profession. He was a "Service member," it is true, but he was "member for Oldham" first, and not merely member for Oldham, but trustee for the British public. Proud of his profession, he saw it nevertheless in its true perspective as an instrument in the hands of the State. The Army existed for the State, and not the State for the Army. With his broad outlook and wide sympathies he distrusted both the arrogance of the "expert" and the meretricious allurements of "militarism."

In his Plymouth speech (17th August 1900) he dealt faithfully with the "experts,"

who would ride off on their high horse along the *à priori* way of authority :—

"It would be found, as soon as they began to inquire into these matters, that the experts and the friends of the experts would come out against them with much beating of drums and blare of bugles, and would say, 'What do you know about Imperial defence, and how can you presume to give your opinion on such matters? These,' they would say, 'are questions which can only be decided by the military profession and those who possess a technical education in military matters.' He happened recently to belong to the military profession. For seven years he had been trained in the theory and practice of modern war. Heaven forbid that he should pose as an expert; but he knew enough to tell them that there were very few things in military administration which a business man of common sense and a little imagination could not understand if he turned his attention to the subject; and anyone who told them the contrary was nothing better than a humbug."

The following passage, all the more remarkable in that it was written on the field of war, occurs in one of his telegrams to the *Morning Post* immediately after the relief of Ladysmith :—

"At the end of the war the nation must not be lured from the fertile fields of commerce into the stony wastes of militarism. The task before the War Office will be to fold up and pack away conveniently this splendid war machine, so that it may rust as little as possible and be ready for use at short notice when next required, which, let us pray, will not be for many years. Then, having gloriously performed a necessary duty in South Africa, the Empire must turn with renewed energy to productive pursuits, and the people of England must devote themselves to stimulating and sustaining the spirit of the people by measures of social improvement and reform."

"The curse of militarism," in Churchill's view, was one of the direst calamities that could befall a nation. A wise foreign policy had hitherto averted it from this country almost alone among European states.

"Europe groans beneath the weight of armies. There is scarcely a single important Government whose finances are not embarrassed; there is not a Parliament or a people from whom a cry of weariness has not been wrung. The preparations of one state are followed by counter-preparations of its neighbour. On all sides the millions have been squandered everywhere, the armies have

fattened on the impoverishment of nations, and the dull, dark clouds of militarism brood over the Continent, shutting out the sunshine of prosperity and freedom in which the happier peoples of Britain and the United States have so long thrived and flourished."[1]

In the proposals of the Government he found matter for alarm rather than reassurance. "The desire to provide three Army Corps almost immediately ready for over-sea war—a provision without parallel among modern states—is unhealthy. It betrays immoral yearnings."[2] The words recall the terms of the famous letter in which his father intimated to Lord Salisbury his resignation of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer on 22nd December 1886:—

"A wise foreign policy will extricate England from continental struggles and keep her outside of German, Russian, French, or Austrian disputes. I have for some time observed a tendency in the Government attitude to pursue a different line of action, which I have not been able to modify or check. This tendency is certain to be accentuated if

[1] Royal Theatre, Wallsend, 12th February 1903.
[2] Preface to *Mr Brodrick's Army*, Speeches by Winston Spencer Churchill, M.P.

large Estimates are presented to and voted by Parliament. The possession of a very sharp sword offers temptation which becomes irresistible to demonstrate the efficiency of the weapon in a practical manner. I remember the vulnerable and scattered character of the Empire, the universality of our commerce, the peaceful tendencies of our democratic electorate, the hard times, the pressure of competition, and the high taxation now imposed, and with these factors vividly before me, I decline to be a party to encouraging the military and militant circle of the War Office and Admiralty to join in the high and desperate stakes which other nations seem to be forced to risk."

With such experiences, with such inherited instincts, Churchill had already formed certain very definite and clear-cut opinions on the subject of Army Reform. They may be briefly summarised as follows :—

1. Army Reform is a question of quality rather than of quantity.

"Sir, at the late election I placarded 'Army Reform' as large as any one. I am pledged to the hilt to Army Reform. But what is Army Reform? I take it to be one of two things. Either it means the same efficiency at a reduced cost, or increased

efficiency for the same cost. Perhaps it might mean greatly increased efficiency for a slightly increased cost. But one thing it certainly does not mean is merely a larger number of regular soldiers. That is not Army Reform, but Army increase." [1]

2. Nothing could be more dangerous for this country than to follow continental models for National and Imperial defence. On the one hand, Great Britain is an island. It has no land frontiers across which an enemy can hurl his forces simultaneously with the declaration of war. It is inhabited by a vast industrial population which cannot be maintained by the produce of the soil. On the other hand, the Empire is oceanic. It depends on sea power and the maintenance of free communication by sea for its very existence. The wars in which European nations may engage must be waged in the midst of civilised communities, in densely populated, industrial and cultivated countries, well provided with roads, railways and the mechanism of transit and communication. The conditions are favourable to the operation and control of

[1] The House of Commons: On Mr Brodrick's Scheme, 13th May 1900.

large bodies of troops. The Imperial wars in which we may reasonably apprehend that we may have to engage on land will be waged against, or among, semi-savage tribes, in sparsely populated and uncultivated countries, and without any developed system of roads and railways. No help is to be obtained, therefore, by taking continental models. We must work out the solution of our problems of defence on independent lines.

3. Our first and all-important line of defence is upon the sea. The prime duty of protecting the United Kingdom from an invasion in force must be undertaken by the Fleet. On the maintenance of an efficient fleet our national energies and resources must be concentrated. The Army must be definitely recognised as the secondary or auxiliary arm. To maintain an Army and a Navy on the same scale would be to convert the initial advantage of our insular position into a penalty, by imposing on us the double burden of land defence on a continental scale and naval defence on an insular scale. In the event of a signal defeat of our fleet, the real danger would be not invasion but blockade,

which, to a country so densely populated, would mean starvation. Churchill put this aspect of the case in the form of an ingenious dilemma.

"As to a stronger Regular Army for Home Defence, either we have the command of the sea or we have not. If we have it, we want fewer soldiers; if we have it not, we want more ships."[1]

4. The danger of a raid upon our shores may be adequately met by an effective—and not a sham—organisation of the Militia, Yeomanry, and Volunteers. As part of her defensive policy Germany must be prepared to attack in her turn—to create a diversion by despatching a huge body of highly-trained men across her own frontiers and into the enemy's country. There is no such obligation upon us. To attempt to land an army on the Continent would simply be to place ourselves gratuitously within reach of our enemy's weapons. From the military point of view, the enormous initial advantage of the defence is ours. If the war in South Africa has proved anything, it has proved

[1] House of Commons: the "Beckett Amendment," 24th February 1903.

the enormous initial advantage enjoyed by a citizen army defending its homeland. Moreover, modern developments in the range and precision of fire-arms, and the application of science to war, have vastly increased the importance of individual intelligence, energy, and initiative as against the training of large masses of men to act together automatically at the word of command. In former days the soldier was a mere weapon to be hurled against the enemy in greater or less numbers by his officers. The soldier of the future must be, to a certain extent, his own general; he will fight in scattered formation instead of touching shoulders with his fellows, and he will often have to think and act for himself.

"In the times when wars were fought by great columns and masses of men in very close array, drill was of the greatest importance, but nowadays an intelligent man who knows what he is fighting for, with a good cause and stout heart and a rifle that he knows how to use, is a very ugly customer to tackle—even though he knows nothing of pipeclay."[1]

[1] Wallsend, Royalty Theatre, 13th February 1903.

5. The Regular Army should be maintained for Imperial Service and not for Home Defence. It ought to be a relatively small army compared with those maintained by continental nations, extremely mobile, highly trained, well staffed, and equipped with the very best Intelligence Department that it is possible to provide.

"The British Regular Army of the future will have to be, nearly all of it, serving abroad in the great garrisons of the Empire—India, Egypt, South Africa, and in the various fortresses and coaling stations which are so necessary to us; and for this reason you will only be able to have a very small Regular Army at home. It ought to be a very good Army, perhaps much better paid and, I hope, better trained than at present, but still it can only be a very small Army—an Army big enough to send an expedition to fight the Mahdi or the Mad Mullah, and just the kind of Army to do that sort of thing very well, but not big enough to fight the Russians, or the Germans, or the French, except in countries which they would find it very difficult to reach in large numbers."[1]

6. Above all, first and last, it must be re-

[1] Oldham, Co-operative Hall, 17th January 1903.

membered that no defensive organisation can be permanently successful unless there is entrenched behind it a prosperous and contented people. Armies never have been, and never can be, the true measure of Imperial strength. The proudest and most perfectly disciplined army that ever existed would prove but a broken reed under the strain of war if the people from whom its nourishment was drawn were taxed up to the margin of existence. War imposes a frightful strain, and it is the nation which is able to draw upon the largest reserves of patriotism, energy, and untaxed wealth which is bound to win in the long run. A large army is but a mockery of strength unless it rests "on the wealth of a commercial country, and on the patriotic and warlike impulses of a people not wearied of the military yoke."

It was with this body of well-defined first principles that Churchill approached the consideration of the Army Reform Scheme which Mr Brodrick laid before the House of Commons in March 1903. In almost every respect the scheme failed to meet these requirements. It sacrificed quality to quantity.

It called for a largely increased Army on paper, but it provided no adequate means for keeping up the strength. Its requirements were far beyond the capacity of our recruiting system to supply, and, indeed, Mr Brodrick not obscurely hinted that in the event of sufficient recruits not being forthcoming, under our voluntary system, the Government might feel compelled to resort to conscription. The Army Corps system, though well adapted to continental countries, provided large and unwieldy units totally unadapted for warlike operations such as this country was likely to be engaged in, or for administrative purposes in time of peace. The scheme provided for an enormously increased Army expenditure on the same scale as the Navy. It not only retained the theory that the task of Home Defence is part of the duty of the Regular Army, it proposed to increase the Army for that purpose. Over and above the Imperial Service Army stationed in India and the Colonies and Dependencies, it sought to provide at home three Army Corps, or 120,000 men, ready for foreign service at a moment's notice.

When the scheme was first laid before the House it seemed as if an honest attempt were about to be made to encourage and develop the Volunteer Force, but this hope was soon dispelled by the appearance of the new "Regulations." It became apparent that those who were administering it were animated by a strong prejudice against the Volunteers. Not only were the "Auxiliary Forces" subjected to official flouts and snubs at the War Office, but they were harassed by the imposition of stringent and arbitrary regulations and conditions, the object of which was to assimilate them to the Regulars; to force them all into the same rigid mould of professional militarism. The consequence was that numerous resignations, both of officers and men, led to an alarming depletion of that force. The only persons who seemed satisfied were the advocates of conscription, who believed that the ruin of the Volunteers would lead inevitably to conscription.

The rapid collapse and complete fiasco of Mr Brodrick's attempt to put his plan into operation has already been described. The fact of his failure was, as Churchill boldly

said "a grim consolation." His success would have been a national disaster. It would have saddled this country for many years to come with a vast costly army, quite uusuited to our needs, a drain upon our resources in time of peace, a drag and an encumbrance in time of war. Even if Mr Brodrick's administrative genius had been able to produce six fully fledged Army Corps, with local habitations as well as names, with rank and file as well as generals, that would have been no answer to the contention that we do not want in this country the Army Corps system at all; that it would be a mischievous aberration, an intolerable burden, the more complete the more burdensome.

The War Office knows Mr Brodrick no more, and his place is occupied by another, who has flung the various items of his programme, one by one, overboard. The most striking features of the scheme which Mr Arnold Forster has produced, are: (1) The definite recognition of the principle that the duty of protecting this country from invasion in force must be undertaken by the Fleet, and that, therefore, a large Regular Army is

not required for Home Defence. (2) A definite movement in the direction of reduction of numbers and cost. (3) The deliberate abandonment of the idea of conscription. (4) The division of the Army into two parts: a long-service Army stationed abroad and a short-service Army stationed at home. The part of the Army stationed at home would not be a Home Defence Army. It would simply be a convenient means for passing a number of men through a two years' training and then turning them into the Reserve, ready to be called upon, in an emergency, for foreign service. (5) The creation of a small striking force of 15,000 or 16,000 men, complete in all arms and quartered at Aldershot ready to proceed to the front at a moment's notice. (6) An improvement in the Volunteers by striking off inefficients and by granting additional funds to secure a higher efficiency on the part of those who remain.

These proposals constitute a complete reversal of Mr Brodrick's policy, and they are based on general principles which Churchill has consistently advocated. There is room of course for much divergence on points of

detail, and with regard to the exact methods whereby the proposals are to be carried out. Churchill's attitude is indicated by a resolution which he placed on the Notice Paper of the House on the day following Mr Arnold Forster's statement. The resolution expressed approval of the declaration of the Government that a large Regular Army is not required for Home Defence, and welcomed in principle the reduction of the Regular Army by 35,000 men, but declared that, having regard to such reduction, it is the more necessary that the Militia, Yeomanry, and Volunteers should be maintained in strength and efficiency.

It is not often that a private member obtains a triumph so complete.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FAIR TRADE ISSUE

"YOU will see that I have foreseen and anticipated this great crisis, and that when it came I was not taken at all by surprise."[1] There were not many members of Parliament who could go down to their constituents after Mr Chamberlain had set the Thames on fire with his attack upon Free Trade, and say, "I told you so." Few had foreseen, few had prepared for, the sensational declaration at Birmingham, on 16th May 1903, in favour of Preferential Tariffs and the rapid development of a full-blown Protection campaign. There was a prevailing tendency to make light of Mr Chamberlain's proposal. One set of quidnuncs maintained that it was simply a red herring drawn across the trail of the Education Bill and the War Commission Report. Others regarded it as

[1] At the Annual Meeting of the Oldham Conservative Association, 31st July 1903.

a reckless bid for the Premiership by breaking up the existing Cabinet. Others again, believing that now at last their ancient enemy was delivered into their hands, averred that whom the gods would destroy they first made mad.

Those who regarded Mr Chamberlain's attack on Free Trade as a bolt out of the blue sky were strangely blind to the prevailing tendency of the previous seven years. There had been many signs and tokens. The little cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, appeared on the horizon many years before, and gradually, with the growth of taxation, the increase of waste, and the neglect of social and educational reform, it had overcast the heavens. The Birmingham pronouncement was no accident, no whim, no caprice, no temporary madness. It was a part of the gradually increasing purpose of the kind of Imperialism of which Mr Chamberlain had been the chief exponent. It was the inevitable result of the continuation of that policy. The manufacturers and producers who have supported Mr Chamberlain's costly policy are sinking beneath the accumulating burden of

taxation. The nation, handicapped by its burdens in international competition, may be driven to prey upon itself. Mr Chamberlain knew and foresaw; he had the courage of his policy and of his convictions.

But Destiny, which had brought the republican Mayor from his civic duties at Birmingham and made him the most powerful minister in a Unionist Government, had also taken a youth from one of the noble families of England, had miraculously preserved him through a hundred hair-breadth perils, from one extremity of the Empire to the other, and had brought him finally to the House of Commons to frustrate the consummation of a life's ambition.

When, in the first session of his first Parliament, Winston Churchill delivered his speech in opposition to Mr Brodrick's Army Scheme, he unknowingly committed himself to the heroic struggle with Joseph Chamberlain which he has now entered upon. The ground on which he took his stand was retrenchment. He called a halt to the reckless and headlong increase of expenditure on unproductive objects. A

year later he recognised the tremendous issues he had raised. His speech on the Budget, on the 14th April 1902, contained a prophetic passage which has already been quoted (*see* page 124). "The Fair Trade issue," he foresaw, would be "boldly raised by some responsible person of eminence and authority," "party bitterness such as this generation has not known" would be engendered, and "existing political organisations—now so artificially serene"—would be split asunder. All of which came to pass within the space of two years from the day when it was spoken, and when Winston Churchill went down to visit his constituents, he was entering upon an issue for which he was perfectly prepared.

But we are all liable to error—even the youngest of us. Though Churchill saw the coming of the "Fair Trade issue" afar off, he did not discern the precise manner of its coming. He was not prepared for the stealthy and subterranean advances which the advocates of Protection were even then making. In the corn duty of a shilling on the quarter, which was part of the Budget

of 1902, he failed to recognise the first dose of what he has since called "Protection by hypodermic syringe."

In the light of his subsequent career, it cannot be denied that Churchill made a false step in the support which he gave to the Shilling Corn Tax in 1902. The blunder, however, does not surprise one when it is remembered that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was immediately responsible for this tax, was a Free Trader, whose orthodoxy has never been questioned. In thus allowing himself to be made the stalking-horse of the Protectionists, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach created a frequent source of embarrassment to himself and other members of the Unionist "Free Food League" in the not far distant future.

The Corn Tax was put forward as a revenue tax. The prolongation of a costly war had rendered new taxation imperative. The back of the income tax-payer had already been severely strained, and it was argued that, in order to keep the balance even as between direct and indirect tax-payers, it was necessary to place part of the new taxation

upon some article of common consumption. "We must broaden the basis of taxation," was the formula adopted. The staple of life—the commonest of all articles of consumption—was the basis selected, and the Corn Tax was introduced into the House of Commons by a Free Trade Chancellor of the Exchequer, amid the plaudits of Mr Chaplin and the triumphant "Well done!" of Sir Howard Vincent.

The necessity of raising more money to pay for the South African policy of the Government, which had recently been endorsed by the people at a General Election, was paramount for the moment. If the people call the tune they must pay the piper. Churchill borrowed a leaf from the book of that stern and unbending economist, Mr John Morley, who, in the previous session, had supported the sugar duty on the principle that "the tax-gatherer is the best schoolmaster." A food tax was not one which was likely to be popular in itself, but with characteristic courage Churchill took the high ground that he was not afraid to "trust the people" to bear their

share of the burden of a policy they had deliberately approved. The contention that the tax was a protective one he brushed aside as a purely theoretical point of academic interest. After all, it was "only a little one." A shilling on the quarter would hardly "facilitate the growing of wheat in England." Not even the compromising enthusiasm of Sir Howard Vincent could disturb his equanimity. "If ever a tax was damned with praise not faint, it was this. It would, however, survive the eulogies even of the honourable and gallant member for Sheffield."[1]

A year later, there was a new Chancellor of the Exchequer. Mr Ritchie was as orthodox a Free Trader as Sir Michael, and he had never been easy about this tax. His reluctant consent had been given to it in the first instance as a "war tax," and now that the war was over, to quote his own narrative, "I suggested to my colleagues that the shilling should come off. But these were not the only reasons. The Colonial Secretary desired

[1] House of Commons: Budget Debate, 12th May 1902.

that the shilling should be kept on, and that preference should be given to the Colonies. Well, I was most determinedly opposed to any such proposal. I told the Prime Minister without hesitation that if the Cabinet adopted that policy, I should leave the Government."[1] Mr Ritchie had great allies. The bye-elections at Bury and Woolwich had proved that the "bread tax" was thoroughly unpopular. The Opposition were pledged to repeal the tax when they came into power; why should they, asked the subtle Prime Minister, be left with such a trump card to play? So the Corn Tax was repealed, and Mr Ritchie and Mr Chamberlain remained together in the Cabinet—a house divided against itself.

The psychologic moment for Mr Chamberlain's appeal to the country had now come. In the Cabinet he had reached the full length of his tether. The repeal of the Corn Tax brought his Fabian policy of advance to a dead halt. The time had come when he must reach behind his colleagues to the electors. Without consulting his colleagues in the

[1] At a meeting of his constituents, Croydon, 9th October 1903.

Cabinet[1] he went down to Birmingham and announced that the issue of the next General Election would be the federation of the Empire by means of Preferential Tariffs. On the same day the Prime Minister was informing a deputation of agriculturists that the Corn Tax was being remitted because it revived "ancient controversies!" "I can at last die happy," Sir Howard Vincent hastened to write to the editor of the *Times*.

A political situation was created, unprecedented in the history of the country. The most conspicuous and powerful member of the Cabinet had declared for the reversal of the fiscal system which had for half a century been the common ground of both parties. A large number of his colleagues were known to be resolutely opposed to him. The country looked for resignations, but none were forthcoming. Mr Chamberlain had a policy; Mr Ritchie had a policy; the Prime Minister blew hot and cold. Thenceforward the march of events was rapid. Within a week of his Birmingham pronouncement, Mr Chamber-

[1] *Cf.* Mr Ritchie's speech at Croydon, 9th October 1903.

lain had promised increased wages and old-age pensions to the working man as the result of the adoption of his policy. Still no sign from the Cabinet. On 28th May Sir Charles Dilke moved the adjournment of the House to consider "definite matter of urgent public importance"—the declarations of the Colonial Secretary—and Mr Chamberlain took the opportunity to deliver what may be described, in the words which Mr Gibson, M.P., once applied to an early Radical speech of his, as "a bold, metaphysical and dangerous speech." The murder was out! "Therefore we come to this—if you are to give a preference to the Colonies—I do not say that you are—you must put a tax on food." The quotation supplied headlines to a leading Radical paper for a month.

In his heart Mr Chamberlain cherishes a great and magnificent ideal. One vast conception kindles his imagination and fills his mind to the exclusion of almost everything else. It is no less than the reorganisation and reconstitution of the Empire, the transformation of this commonwealth of self-governing states, united by a voluntary tie,

into one vast, self-contained, self-centred federation, with a common parliament like the United States of America. It is a great and fruitful ideal, one which, properly pursued, may be a great factor both in the history of the Empire and of the world. Others, inspired by it, have sought to advance along the line of closer political union, of calling upon the Colonies to share our councils. The fact that many of the Colonies have already, on their own initiative, commenced to contribute towards the cost of Imperial defence, both by maintaining militia and by voting annual grants for the Navy, has already suggested the possibility of one great Council of Imperial Defence. But such institutions are necessarily of slow growth.

Mr Chamberlain is not content to lay a stone in the grand arch of Federal Union; the consuming ambition of his life is to be known to posterity as the statesman who federated the Empire. It is to be the crown of his career. He pursues his ideal with the infatuation of a gambler. His feverish haste cannot wait upon the slow and gradual processes of Nature, in whose eyes a thousand

years are but a day. At sixty-eight the sands in his glass are running low. In the nature of things he is an old man in a hurry, and the calculating impatience of age is a much more dangerous quality than the impetuous daring of youth. There was another method of approaching the problem. If the Colonies showed a disinclination to take any definite and final step towards a closer political union or a Council of National Defence, on the merits of the question, nevertheless, if it was made worth their while, if a premium were offered to them, they might hesitate less. If closer political bonds were unpractical for the moment, a "fiscal bond" might be devised, which would lead sooner, rather than later, to the ultimate goal of Imperial Federation. These were the thoughts working in Mr Chamberlain's mind when, in his address to the Congress of Chambers of Commerce of the Empire in 1896 (9th June), he made the tentative suggestion of an Imperial Zollverein or Customs Union. Doubtless, we should have heard more of this suggestion but for the rapid development of events in South Africa. The Colonies fought shy of anything

so formal even as a Customs Union, and when Mr Chamberlain returned from his South African tour in the spring of 1903, to enter upon the last and greatest campaign of his life, his proposal was whittled down to this, that the financial interest of the Colonies in Imperial Union be strengthened by the offer to them of "Preferential Tariffs"—a shilling on the quarter of Canadian wheat, and a penny on the pound of New Zealand mutton.

"A system of Preferential Tariffs is the only system by which this Empire can be kept together."[1] This was the ultimatum which he delivered to the British people. Now it is one thing to say that the Empire is in danger of dissolution and that Preferential Tariffs are the only means by which this danger can be averted. It is quite another thing to say that Protection, or Preferential Trading, is a very good and desirable thing in itself. The two contentions are quite distinct and have no necessary connection with one another. When Mr Chamberlain spoke at Birmingham his argument was entirely confined to the former contention. He even

[1] Constitutional Club Luncheon, 26th June 1903.

went out of his way to express his adherence to theoretical Free Trade. "I am perfectly certain that I am not a Protectionist," he said. Preferential Tariffs was the price he was willing to pay—the sacrifice he was prepared to make—in order to secure the boon which he regarded as greater than Free Trade, closer union with the Colonies. And on this basis he obtained the unselfish support of so orthodox a Free Trader as Sir Robert Giffen, who wrote to the *Times* (28th May) to say that, though he regarded Preferential Tariffs as economically unsound, nevertheless "the question now before the country is more political than economic." Preferential Tariffs might cause an economic loss, yet the price was worth paying if it would avert an Imperial danger.

Gradually, however, another tone began to make itself heard in Mr Chamberlain's utterances. "You must put a tax on food" might be magnificent, but it was not electioneering. The electors were alarmed; the *Daily Mail* was staggered. In Mr Balfour's phrase, "the country was not ripe" for such a proposal. As the days went past it became

more and more evident that he was not going to carry Preferential Tariffs by a frontal attack. Like a wise strategist, he began to prepare a flanking movement. "Is it not conceivable," he asked (House of Commons, 28th May), "that we shall have to defend our own trade against unjust competition?" It was no more than a hint, but it intimated to all whom it might concern that with a little encouragement he was prepared to shift his ground from "Preference" to "Protection," pure and simple. From this time forward "unfair competition," "decaying industries," "dumping," and "retaliation" occupied an increasingly large proportion of his speeches, until at last the Federation of the Empire was relegated to the exordium and the peroration. When he inaugurated his autumn campaign at Glasgow (6th October), he had wrought himself to such a pitch that he was prepared to deny that there was any sacrifice involved.

"Although I would not hesitate to ask you for a sacrifice, if a sacrifice were needed to keep together the Empire to which I attach so much importance, I do not believe that there would be any sacrifice at all."

Next morning the *Daily Mail*, in a signed

editorial article, announced its adherence to Mr Chamberlain on the basis of the protection of manufactured goods.

Right from the beginning Churchill foresaw that Chamberlain would be driven back upon the economic argument. A preference to the Colonies could only be given on food, and not only would the people never consent to a bread tax, but the whole body of manufacturers would offer a determined resistance to a partial protection which increased the cost of living without granting any relief to their special industries. There was not the faintest hope of carrying a Preferential Tariff in favour of the Colonies save as part of a general protective system, in which interest would be balanced against interest, and the consumer would be juggled into a belief that his losses in increased cost of living would be made good by recoupments in some other direction. In his first speech in the House after the issue had been raised, he compared the situation to the Home Rule crisis in 1886, and predicted accurately the course which Mr Chamberlain's agitation would be forced to take.

"The Colonial Secretary will not be able to stop, if he desires it, at a simple system of Preferential Tariffs. He would have to fight a fierce battle, in which the manufacturing 'Fair Traders' and the agricultural Protectionists will be his supporters."[1]

As to which side he would be on, he was never in doubt. It was on the economic argument that he joined issue. "To say that Protection meant a greater development of wealth was an economic absurdity—and to say that it meant a fairer distribution of wealth was a downright lie" (Chelsea, 10th December 1903). This country was so situated as regards climate, geographical position, and population, that of all countries in the world, Free Trade was calculated to do it the maximum amount of good and Protection the maximum amount of injury. The effect of a return to Protection would be to diminish the total producing capacity of the country, to facilitate the formation of monopolies and trusts, and to concentrate a larger amount of wealth in fewer hands. "Free Trade was to England," he maintained, "not

[1] House of Commons: 28th May 1903.

merely a right and logical policy, but a bread-and-butter policy" (Oldham, 30th July 1903). Holding these economic views, he proceeded to consider the wholly distinct Imperial argument. That it was no sordid appeal he was quick to recognise. "There is a Quixotic nobility about Imperial preference in strong contrast to the selfishness of manufacturers' protection."[1] But was the sacrifice worth making? Would it achieve its object of strengthening the bonds of union of the Empire? On the contrary, his view was that the loyalty of the Colonies to the Empire was not a thing which could be purchased by a shilling a quarter on corn and a penny a pound on mutton; and, further, that the effect of the imposition of these heavy burdens would be to alienate the working classes of this country from the very idea of Empire. The scheme would not only inflict an economic loss on the people of this country, but it was fraught with ruin and disaster to the Empire.

[1] Letter to the Secretary of the Midland Centre Postal Telegraph Clerks' Association, dated 28th November 1903.

The candid words of Mr Arthur Chamberlain, brother of the ex-Colonial Secretary, and the director of several great industrial enterprises, reveal the deep tap-root of Protectionism.

"In my own selfish interest I am not afraid of Protection. It would make the rich richer and the poor poorer. Give us Protection, and we manufacturers will show you something in the way of rings, and trusts, and syndicates that you little dream of. The Free Trade policy alone has protected the people of England from the proceedings of trusts and rings. Relieve us of foreign competition, and you will have an experience which you will not enjoy. Protection will change the entire course of business. With the possibility of getting a duty put on the things that are necessary to your competitors, and the possibility of keeping a duty off the things that are necessary to you, 'lobbying' would become more important to the manufacturer than the slow processes of the factory. I could make more money in an evening in the House of Commons by arranging for the taxation of my opponents' necessities and for the maintenance of a free market for myself, than I could make by honest industry in a month."[1]

[1] Interview in the *Manchester Guardian*, 8th September 1903.

In language equally terse, Churchill has put forward the same point of view in speech after speech. The appointment of the "Tariff Commission" provided him with a great object lesson which he did not fail to turn to advantage. The "Tariff Commission" was a committee of manufacturers and capitalists appointed under the auspices of the Tariff Reform League, and its object, as Mr Chamberlain informed his Leeds audience (16th December), was "to frame a model tariff." The notice of the appointment of the "Commission" issued to the press was a document couched with all the aplomb of a Royal Proclamation. "In the event of a Government pledged to Tariff Reform coming into power," it ran, "it would be of the utmost service that the preliminary investigations should have been made." Here, then, was where the "lobbying" must be done for Mr Chamberlain's tariff. There followed, among the Protectionist manufacturers, what Churchill unsympathetically described as "the ugly rush to join the Tariff Commission." Speaking at Halifax (21st December), a few days after this announcement, he made

it the theme of a powerful and indignant invective.

"This disinterested, impartial, and representative 'Commission' is to be composed entirely and exclusively of thirty or forty political nonentities and company-directors, every one of whom has declared himself beforehand a Protectionist, and every one of whom is nominated by Mr Chamberlain himself, and who—with scarcely a dozen exceptions—stand to profit in purse and pocket to the tune of many thousands a year by the adoption of these new proposals. It is usual to win the battle before sharing the plunder; but here are these gentlemen setting to work to parcel out Naboth's vineyard among themselves and their backers without even going through the preliminary of expropriating its owner. And I would ask you to observe that the proceedings of this Commission will afford continual opportunities of making terms with every separate interest in the country for its political support at the forthcoming election. In plain English, it will inaugurate a gigantic operation of bargaining in votes—and a form of bribery and corruption not yet amenable to the law."

The establishment of Protection would inevitably be followed by the demoralisation and corruption of public life and political

organisations in this country. The House of Commons—"hitherto chaste because unsolicited"—would be beset by the touts of protected, and would-be protected, industries. Even Mr Arthur Chamberlain, the Free Trader, candidly, if a little cynically, acknowledges, "when it came to the 'pushing of pikes,' I should be there." Here is a picture of electioneering in the future under a Protectionist *régime*:—[1]

"The first set of tariffs may indeed be framed to serve the trade of the country.[2] The second set will be arranged to suit the fortunes of a party. This to catch the iron vote, that to collar cotton; this other, again, to rope in the woollens. Every dirty little monopolist in the island will have his own 'society' to push his special trade; and for each and all the watchword will be, 'Scratch my back,' and the countersign, 'I'll scratch yours.' Every election will turn on tariff. . . . All who will organise effectively shall share the spoils. All who cannot organise will pay the costs. . . . Favours for all in front, and the devil take the hindmost."

[1] The *Monthly Review*, November 1903: "Sheffield and its Shadow," by Winston S. Churchill.

[2] The Tariff Commission had not yet been appointed.

And again—

"Out of these changed conditions and unmeasured forces the new party will emerge. Not the old historic Conservatism, with its traditions, its beliefs and its dreams, but a blatant thing of 'caucuses' and 'platforms,' acting through a tributary House of Commons, sustained by a strong confederation of capitalists and combinations, and founded on special classes of organised and privileged labour. The slave of great interests. The master of a great people. Over all, like a red robe flung about the shoulders of a sturdy beggar, an extravagant and aggressive militarism; and at the top, installed in splendour, a party leader, half German Chancellor, half American boss."

Will the shutting out of foreign goods increase the total amount of wealth in this country? Can foreign nations grow rich at our expense by selling us goods under cost price? Can a people tax themselves into prosperity? Can a man stand in a bucket and lift himself up by the handle? By such shrewd questioning Churchill meets the specious arguments of "Fair Trade," which have considerable attraction for minds untrained in economic reasoning. Mr Balfour

has chosen to go to the country on "Retaliation," and Mr Chamberlain on "Dumping." Their shields are reverse sides of the same design. Churchill meets them full tilt, taking them one after the other or both together. Free imports are the most effective retaliation against hostile tariffs. The best revenge upon the dumper is to accept as much of the dumped goods as possible, and to send them back to him in the shape of manufactures he cannot compete against.

"Swiftly and surely, directed and impelled, not by a muddled Government and a harassed legislature, through the agency of stupid and expensive Customs officials, but by the steady workings of inexorable laws, come the retaliations of Free Trade. Consider bountied sugar. Sugar becomes cheap in England and dear in Germany. Manufactures in England requiring sugar thrive; manufactures in Germany requiring sugar starve. The raw material is thrust upon us below cost price; we retort by sending back the finished article. The German dumps sugar at a loss. We return high-grade manufactures of sugar at a profit. Our reply to the sugar is 'jam and pickles'; despised, profitable 'jam and pickles,' and much else besides. The German dumps ship-plates at a price

which cannot remunerate him; we retort him ships at a price with which he cannot compete. He 'dumps' his steel, and we answer him with machinery. At every step our business is a paying transaction; at every step his business is a losing transaction. At every step our industries move forward into those higher grades where labour is more skilled, more varied, more generously rewarded, and by proficiency in which an old country can alone maintain that 'leadership' in respect to quality, vital to her industrial strength."[1]

The argument is amplified and enforced by a wealth of illustration. Instances and examples are drawn from the staple industries of the country. Epigram sparkles in every period, literary and historical allusions charm the mind, quaint and unexpected turns of phrase surprise and delight the ear. He has a large measure of that rare and profound gift, of which Gladstone was the master, of making economic reasoning a process of absorbing interest to the average man. On the Free Trade side the honours of the campaign have been his. Others have

[1] Winston S. Churchill, in the *Monthly Review*, November 1903.

intervened with greater weight, but none have made so deep an impression upon the country, none have contributed so many memorable phrases to the discussion, none have handled the subject with a broader outlook. There is no man to-day whom the people hear more gladly, though the fact may not yet have dawned upon the Tadpoles and Tapers of the party caucus.

CHAPTER IX

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

NEVER had a Prime Minister a more difficult task than that which confronted Mr Balfour—to retain in office a Government, the leading members of which were violently opposed to one another on a question of fundamental importance which was being made the subject of a great public agitation. It is impossible to withhold a tribute of admiration for the surpassing political dexterity with which Mr Balfour contrived to stave off the evil day and falsify all the predictions of his critics. Like a tight-rope walker he passed airily over the most dizzy chasms, balancing himself between sympathy with Mr Chamberlain and the conviction that the country was not yet ripe for his proposals. The subtle and ingenious intellect which produced *A Defence of Philosophic Doubt*, and which doubted itself into belief, produced the policy

of "Retaliation," "Freedom to Negotiate" and "Inquiry" to meet the exigencies of the political situation. But, foremost and above all, he proclaimed the doctrine of "the open mind." "Ministerial unanimity of action" was necessary, but that did not necessarily involve ministerial unanimity of opinion. "It would," he told the Constitutional Club at the luncheon to Mr Chamberlain (26th June), "be perfect folly on the part of the Conservative party or the Unionist party to make particular opinions on economic subjects a test of party loyalty." If he expressed his sympathy with Mr Chamberlain, it was to be regarded merely as a platonic affection. For his own part, "I should consider that I were ill performing my duty if I were to profess a settled conviction where no settled conviction exists." He proposed no action—in the meantime. But it was time to investigate the working of the existing fiscal system. It was human, therefore it was imperfect, and it might be improved. Let there be a truce till the autumn, and meantime let there be "Inquiry" and "Discussion."

Mr Arthur Chamberlain is a shrewd judge of men, and has a terse and emphatic manner of expressing his judgments. His summing up of the situation has become classic. At a meeting of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce on 22nd July, he said :—

"No one really who was in the know cared for the 'Inquiry' which was promised. It was only, in plain English, waiting until they were ready to have a raging, tearing propaganda ; it was only keeping them from discussing the thing by saying, 'Oh, but there is an Inquiry.' There would be no inquiry in the autumn. The moment the time came for certain people to go round addressing the country, the only inquiry would be, 'Can I get the people to vote for me?'"

"Certain people," indeed, did not wait for the autumn. The battle of the Leagues was raging fierce and strong. The Birmingham Tariff Committee started its leaflet factory under the zealous eye of Mr C. A. Vince, M.A. Mr C. A. Pearson, of *Pearson's Weekly*, taught the Tariff Reform League how to "hustle." The Unionist Free Traders took grave and dignified

council together in the precincts of the House of Commons, the upshot of which was the formation of the Unionist Free Food League. The "raging, tearing proganda" went on in the country, but in Parliament there prevailed an ominous calm as of gathering waters long held back.

The Unionist Free Traders formed a group distinguished alike for the prestige, experience and authority of its older members, and for the energy and high intellectual power of its younger members. "Veterans must take their place," said Lord Goschen as he took down his dented shield from the wall, and girded on his armour for the fray. The Duke of Devonshire took his stand beside him, and Lord Avebury and Lord Balfour of Burleigh. In the Lower House Mr Ritchie and Lord George Hamilton were supported by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Mr Arthur Elliot, Sir Edgar Vincent, Sir John Gorst, Mr Henry Hobhouse, Major Seely, Lord Hugh Cecil and Winston Churchill. From the beginning of the great fight Cecil and Churchill took their places as protagonists. Even beside such veterans as Goschen and

Devonshire, they bore their full share of the heat and burden of the day. In the House of Commons they led the fray and divided honours. The keenest shafts which found their way between the joints of Mr Balfour's armour were those of his kinsmen.

Convinced that a great party crisis was at hand, Churchill lost no time in communicating with the Executive of the Oldham Conservative Association. At his suggestion a resolution was passed, according him the fullest liberty during the period of "Discussion" and "Inquiry" which had been invited. Seldom has similar liberty been taken fuller advantage of. In the House of Commons he pressed upon Mr Chamberlain the inconvenient question, "How can we discuss the question unless we know, at anyrate, the outlines of his scheme?" But he quickly found that Parliament was the one place where the "Inquiry" could not be carried on.

"The great question of the day may be argued in the palace and in the coal-hole. Every chamber of commerce may debate it. Every public body may pass a resolution. It is on the agenda of the Eton Debating

Society. It is in order in the Parliament of Peckham. But there is one place in the British Empire where it is 'taboo.' The House of Commons, most interested, most responsible, is to be gagged and smothered by a cynical and ingenious abuse of its own procedure."[1]

"Oh, muzzle the House of Commons!" he exclaimed aloud as the Prime Minister refused to grant a day for discussion. Suppressed in the House of Commons, his energy found an outlet elsewhere. The editor of the *Times*, the Chairman of his local Association, the Secretary of the Postal Telegraphs' Association, a "Correspondent in the North of England," "a Yorkshire Working Man," and many others were favoured with picturesque and racy letters, which the newspapers were only too glad to copy, and which obtained a wider publicity than the vast majority of parliamentary speeches. He threw himself into the work with a ferocious energy, and his speeches prove that his reading on economic subjects must have been severe and thorough. He resisted the temptation, which has proved fatal to so many promising par-

[1] Letter to the editor of the *Times*, 16th July 1903.

liamentarians, to be led away by his nimble wit into mere amusing improvisation. The quality of "fundamental brain-work" was evident in every speech he delivered.

Mr Harold Begbie has described him at this period in the *Pall Mall Magazine*:—

"The shoulders are growing old now, and certainly there is nothing of 'the boy' left in the white, nervous, washed-out face of the member for Oldham. He walks with a stoop, his head thrust forward. His mouth expresses bitterness, the light eyes strained watchfulness. He talks as a man of fifty talks—a little cruelly, slowly, measuring his words, the hand for ever tilting the hat backwards and forwards, or brushing itself roughly across the tired eyes. Essentially a tired face, the expression one of intellectual energy which has to be wound up by a rebellious consciousness. There is indeed little of youth left to the member for Oldham, if we except a waning vanity—common enough among grey heads."

It is a painful picture, and, one would fain hope, to be accounted for by the mood of the moment and a day of extra fatigue. Mr Massingham gives a very different impression in the *Daily News*. Describing Churchill's

WINSTON SPENCER CHURCHILL, M.P.

speech on the second reading of the Sugar Convention Bill (29th July), he says:—

"His speech was undeniably the broadest and most piercing survey of the whole field of Chamberlainism which has been yet presented to the House of Commons. It was a complete success. This young David, armed with sling and stone, went straight out to meet the Protectionist Goliath on the Treasury Bench. Goliath was not precisely slain, but he was wounded sore. The House has enjoyed nothing more for a long time than the encounter in which Mr Churchill kept pouring in shot after shot at Mr Chamberlain, who sat almost sole on the Treasury Bench. The exchange gave obvious pleasure to the assailant and was clearly discomfiting to the victim, whose one attempt to brush aside the attack with a contemptuous reply did not come off. Clearly thought out, marked by brilliant and really literary phrasing, electric with youthful vigour and self-confidence, and full of his father's pugnacity, the speech was more than anything else an attempt to pull down Mr Chamberlain from his place of power in the Unionist party. The elder man, pale, and (for him) very self-contained, winced once or twice under thrusts that showed something of the light-heartedness and something, too, of the cruelty of youth. Personal as it was, the speech was a

really fine and powerful vindication of a great political principle, ardent in tone and serious in purpose. The whole House rang with praises of it."

It is not within the province of this book to trace the steps by which Mr Chamberlain captured the machinery of the Conservative and Liberal Unionist parties. He is an old hand at that game, and the younger man never had a chance beside him. Surely and inevitably the Unionist Free Traders were edged out. The story is long and complicated, and it will be many years yet before it can be told without heat and bitterness. One episode in particular has led to much recrimination. The resignations of Mr Chamberlain, Mr Ritchie, and Lord George Hamilton were announced on the same day, the correspondence between Mr Balfour and Mr Chamberlain alone being published. Some surprise was created by the Duke of Devonshire deciding to remain in the Cabinet. Ten days later, Mr Ritchie and Lord George Hamilton took steps to secure the publication of their own letters when it became known that their resignations had

been sent in ignorance of the fact that Mr Chamberlain had already resigned, though the Cabinet had met twice in the interval. Immediately after Mr Balfour's Sheffield speech the Duke of Devonshire handed in his resignation, and later it was made known that, unlike his Free Trade colleagues, he had been taken into the Prime Minister's confidence and had been informed of Mr Chamberlain's resignation. There was an unpleasant look about these facts which gave rise to scoffing among Mr Balfour's enemies and to uneasiness among his friends. It was not surprising that the appreciative comment of the *Times*, uttered in all good faith, with regard to the relations between Mr Balfour and Mr Chamberlain: "They are playing their game with the skill of accomplished whist players," should have been taken up by the Opposition press and repeated with many amplifications of the metaphor.

The "diplomatic" nature of Mr Chamberlain's resignation is evident from the fact that in leaving the Cabinet he actually laid down the policy it was to pursue in the future. In his letter to Mr Balfour he said:

"Accordingly I suggest that you should limit the present policy of the Government to the assertion of our freedom in the case of all commercial relations with foreign countries."

The situation was "paradoxical" as Mr Balfour acknowledged. He professed himself in absolute agreement with both branches of Mr Chamberlain's fiscal policy, "Freedom to Negotiate" and "Preferential Tariffs." His only obstacle was that "public opinion is not yet ripe for such an arrangement" as that indicated in "the latter branch of fiscal reform." "Freedom to negotiate" accordingly became the official policy of the Cabinet reconstituted with Mr Austen Chamberlain as Chancellor of the Exchequer. This was the manner of that manipulation of principle and of policy which Winston Churchill took the liberty to designate "the Sheffield shuffle."

The annual meeting of the National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations was held at Sheffield on 1st and 2nd October. The only difficulty which was experienced was in restraining the enthusiasm of the delegates for Protection. Sir John

Gorst, Lord Hugh Cecil, and Mr Winston Churchill with difficulty obtained a hearing. The official resolution welcomed the Prime Minister's policy of "securing to this country fiscal freedom in our negotiations and commercial relations with foreign countries." Only at the last moment Mr Chaplin was induced to withdraw a rider expressing confidence in Mr Chamberlain, which, if it had been moved, would undoubtedly have been carried by an overwhelming majority.

A few weeks later, at Newcastle, the Durham County and North Riding Liberal Unionist organisation gave unmistakable evidence of its sympathy with Mr Chamberlain. This elicited from the President of the Central Association, the Duke of Devonshire, who had already become President of the Unionist Free Food League, a remarkable letter, in which he indicated that such proceedings might make it necessary to reconsider the position of Liberal Unionists with regard to the question of rejoining the Liberal party. In December the bye-elections at Dulwich and Lewisham gave occasion for a demonstration of still more uncompro-

mising hostility on the part of the great Liberal Unionist leader. In both cases the Conservative candidates were pronounced Chamberlainites, and, as President of the Free Food League, the Duke caused his opinion to be published that—

"An elector who sympathises with the objects of that League would be well advised to decline to give his support at any election to a Unionist candidate who expresses his sympathy with the policy of Mr Chamberlain and the Tariff Reform League."

This was, as Lord Rosebery would say, the moment of "definite separation." The correspondence which had been going on between the Duke and Mr Chamberlain ever since the Newcastle Conference was brought to a head. Mr Chamberlain demanded that a general meeting of the Association should be called to consider its President's action. The Duke refused, and Mr Chamberlain proceeded to call one "on his own responsibility," the resignation of the President and the reorganisation of the Association under Mr Chamberlain's auspices following in due course.

Churchill meantime was making a resolute fight to hold his position at Oldham. He was fortunate in that Mr J. T. Travis-Clegg, the chairman of his association, a man who commanded the utmost respect of every section of the party, was a Free Trader. He also won over another influential backer in Mr S. Smethurst, who, twenty years before, had been Secretary of the Fair Trade League in Oldham. But the rank-and-file of the party, the committee men who decided its policy, and, in particular, Councillor "Joe" Hilton, a local Cleon with a strong following, remained suspiciously aloof. He succeeded in getting a resolution passed by the Executive, according him the fullest liberty during the period of so-called "Inquiry," and at the annual meeting on 31st July a vote of confidence was passed without demur. After the Sheffield meeting the Executive again met and passed, with his assent, a resolution approving of "the policy declared by the Prime Minister at Sheffield."

But relations were already beginning to be strained. After the Sheffield Conference the press duly noted the fact that neither Cecil

nor Churchill had voted for the official resolution. To the policy of "Freedom to negotiate," announced by Mr Balfour, Churchill gave a contemptuous support. The Government already had freedom to negotiate and to make any proposal to Parliament that it pleased. In the Sugar Convention Bill it had already exercised that freedom in a dangerous direction. The "provisional" nature of the support he accorded may be judged by the phraseology of a letter to Mr Travis-Clegg, dated 9th October, a week after the Conference :—

"I say 'provisional,' because it is impossible altogether to shut out suspicion. . . . If it be true that 'freedom to negotiate' is only a trick and a pretence, I for one would unhesitatingly prefer Mr Chamberlain with his honest downright thumping."

In the public meetings which he addressed thereafter, both in Oldham and elsewhere, he consented that the resolutions submitted should contain a formal expression of support of the "Sheffield policy," but he refused to mitigate by one degree the intensity of his attack upon the policy of Pre-

ferential and Protective Tariffs. Not even the success of Mr Chamberlain's electioneering campaign, he told his constituents (31st July), would reconcile him to the abandonment of Free Trade. "I will never accept its results until I am convinced by logic and reason." From this time all his energy and every faculty were concentrated upon one object—"to defeat Mr Chamberlain's proposals."

One cannot withhold a large measure of sympathy from the tariff reformers of Oldham during this period. Their parliamentary representative was one of the most vehement opponents of their policy, and one of the most damaging assailants of their hero. Just as the Free Traders were muzzled in Parliament, the tariff reformers were muzzled in Oldham. The Unionist Free Traders viewed the "raging, tearing propaganda" of Mr Chamberlain in much the same spirit as the Oldham tariff reformers viewed the equally pronounced activity of their representative. Churchill brought Lord Hugh Cecil down to Oldham, then joined forces with him in an attack upon the citadel of Chamberlainism. "Dis-

gusted Unionist" began to give expression to his feelings in Oldham, and the columns of the *Oldham Standard* bear witness to the literary activity of this ubiquitous individual. Feeling culminated in an invitation to Sir Gilbert Parker, M.P., to address a public meeting in favour of "tariff reform." The meeting was held late in November, just as Mr Churchill was making a round of the Clubs in the constituency. Councillor "Joe" Hilton made a heated attack upon the "junior member," challenging him to take a ballot in every Conservative Club in the borough and to abide by the result. Two days later Churchill, accompanied by Lord Lytton, reached the North Chadderton Club in his round. A meeting had been arranged, but he was met with closed doors and a deputation from some members assembled inside to say that he would not be allowed to address a meeting in the Club. Mounting the box-seat of his carriage, and baring his head in the drenching rain, he addressed a few impassioned words to a cheering crowd. "I have not embarked upon this fight without intending to see it through." Then he drove home,

knowing that he would never again be Conservative member for Oldham.

An apology was, of course, tendered by the Committee for the conduct of the members who were the cause of the *fracas* at the North Chadderton Club. But the breach was past mending. In reply to Councillor Hilton's challenge, Churchill was able to make the effective retort that "no obligation whatever rested upon a Member of Parliament in his position to retire from representation or to resign his seat. He had, at anyrate, not departed from the platform on which he was elected. . . . He would be perfectly ready, if occasion arose, to appeal, not to any hole-and-corner vote from ballots in clubs, but broadly and fairly to the electors of that great industrial centre."

He had already abandoned any hope of being again Conservative candidate, and he was taking steps to form a Free Trade Association. The Duke of Devonshire's Manifesto to the Free Trade Unionists in Dulwich and Lewisham gave him his cue. On 19th December, he addressed a letter to the Liberal candidate in the Ludlow bye-

election, wishing him success in his contest against a Protectionist. "The time has now come," he said, "when Free Traders of all parties should form one line of battle against a common foe." Two days later, addressing a Free Trade Meeting at Halifax, he wound up a fierce indictment of Mr Chamberlain with the words, "Thank God we have a Liberal Party!" The Rubicon was crossed and the boats were burned.

There was hardly any battle to fight within the Oldham Conservative Association now. On 23rd December the General Purposes Committee unanimously passed a resolution, intimating to Mr Churchill—

"That he has forfeited their confidence in him as Unionist member for Oldham, and that in the event of an election taking place, he must no longer rely on the Conservative organisation being used on his behalf."

On 7th January this resolution was confirmed by the General Executive, and the resignations of Mr Smethurst and of the Hon. Secretary were handed in and accepted. Winston Churchill had ceased, in name as

well as in fact, to be Conservative member for Oldham. The battle in the party was lost. His one object was now to make certain that the battle in the country was won.

His final letter to the Association contained this Parthian shot at Mr Balfour.

"When Mr Balfour succeeded Lord Salisbury in the Leadership, he solemnly pledged himself at the Carlton Club meeting that the policy of the party should be unchanged. And yet at Sheffield, only a year afterwards, he declared for 'a fundamental reversal of the policy of the last fifty years.' Therefore it is not against me that any charge of breaking pledges can be preferred."

CHAPTER X

RALLYING THE OPPOSITION.

THE session of Parliament which opened in February 1904 was destined to be one of the most stormy and passionate that this generation has known. Not even the tempestuous "eighties," when the Irish were led by Parnell, and the famous "Fourth Party" was directed by Lord Randolph Churchill, produced more scenes of personal bitterness, exasperation, and organised disorder. The circumstances which accompanied the resignations of Mr Ritchie, Lord George Hamilton, and the Duke of Devonshire, rankled in the breasts of the Free Trade Unionists, in whose view the Government of Mr Balfour had become neither more nor less than an organised hypocrisy. The Liberals were exasperated past endurance by the wholesale measures of reaction introduced by a Government which, as they contended, had obtained no sanction from the people in

the "Khaki Election" for such legislation. Long-sleeping passions, hatreds, and enthusiasms were awakened. The South African Labour Ordinance, the Licensing Bill, the Education (Defaulting Authorities) Bill, the Report of the Committee on the Militia and Volunteers, raised again such profound issues as slavery, monopoly, coercion, and conscription. The gigantic agitation of Mr Chamberlain threw the dark shadow of Protection across a session full of painful and humiliating memories to everyone who holds dear the honour and reputation of the Mother of Parliaments. Many of the "debates" could be likened to nothing other than a rowdy election meeting, where unreasoning partisans alternately try to silence the other side by groans and hootings, and where ribald jeers and offensive epithets are bandied across the House.

All parties were in various degrees to blame, but chiefly the ministers who controlled the business of the House. By an ingenious abuse of the rules of procedure, the safety-valve of free discussion was closed. An interested member, by giving notice of

a motion which he never meant to move, could absolutely muzzle the House. So long as that motion remained upon the Notice Papers, members, were prohibited from discussing its subject, however urgent and important it might be. The Notice Paper was crowded with every motion that a perverted ingenuity and an intelligent anticipation of events could suggest. The evil was admitted on all hands, but rather than assist the House to gain control of its own business, ministers connived at a system which relieved them from many awkward and embarrassing discussions. The consequence was that the greater part of the session was spent in discussing not the affairs of the country, but the manners, methods, and honour of ministers; not the Fiscal Policy, but the jockeying of colleagues out of the Cabinet; the question whether Mr Austen Chamberlain and Mr Walter Long should resign, and whether Mr Balfour presented two "pamphlets" or "documents" to his Cabinet in the previous autumn; not Army Reform, but who sent the Report of the War Office (Reconstruction) Committee

to the Press and dragged in the King's name; not the labour conditions in the Transvaal, but the refusal of the Government to grant a day for their discussion. The nominal majority of the Government was over a hundred; sometimes, with the help of the Irish, it rose considerably higher. But its real majority was as unstable as the price of wheat under the Corn Laws. Test divisions saw it at fifty-one, forty, thirty-seven, twenty-nine and fourteen. Frequently ministers refrained from pressing their own motion, or deliberately obstructed, in order to gain time to bring together a majority of lethargic and reluctant supporters. Once, on an Irish night, they were defeated by eleven votes. "The very air of Westminster smells of dissolution," said Churchill to a Preston audience (26th February). But the dissolution was to be not yet. A weak Government, grasping at power, staving off the evil day by abusing the forms of the House, and an exasperated Opposition, keen but unorganised, were the conditions which produced the disorders and tumults of the session of 1904.

It was no longer as "an independent member," but as a "declared opponent of the Government,"[1] that Churchill commenced his fourth parliamentary session. He was fresh from one of his periodic campaigns in the constituencies. During the last week of January he had addressed a series of large and enthusiastic meetings in Dublin, Worcester, Kidderminster, Aberdeen, and Edinburgh. Private member as he was, disowned by his own party, looked askance at by the others, he was sustained by the thought that in the country, the ultimate arbiter of all parliamentary precedence, he had a vast number of friends. From the place below the gangway, on the Conservative side, where he had recently ensconced himself, he poured a deadly fire of destructive argument and barbed raillery into the Government position. Mr Morley's Free Trade amendment to the Address, and Mr Thomas Lough's motion to call attention to the working of the Brussels Sugar Convention, provided him with occasions for two clearly and powerfully reasoned attacks,

[1] House of Commons: 29th March 1904.

remarkable, even in the House where Mr Morley spoke, for dignity of tone and high seriousness. The former marked his definite parting with his party.

"For the next ten years the hall-mark of a Conservative would be willingness to work wholeheartedly for the policy of the member for Birmingham."

"But some of us," he added, "will not take his terms now or ever." Thenceforward there was no attempt to maintain the fiction of party loyalty. He was prepared to oppose the Government all along the line, and to make advances to the Opposition, for, as he told a Liberal meeting in Manchester some months later (13th May),—

"The truth is, that Free Trade does not stand alone. It is not an ordinary question; it is a touchstone. People who can agree on Free Trade, on the economic, financial, political and moral principles which underlie it, cannot fail to find other subjects of agreement."

Regarding as he did the continued existence of the Government sedulously furthering a policy it had not the courage to profess openly as a menace to the public welfare, he

was able to say "he would not pretend any longer to regret the inevitable change of party authority in the House of Commons" (Preston, 26th February 1904). When a division was taken, he was in the vast majority of cases to be found in the same lobby with the Liberals.

The followers of Mr Chamberlain repaid his hostility with a passionate personal hatred over which they vainly endeavoured to throw a mask of contempt. There was no better hated man in the House of Commons—not even Mr Chamberlain himself. The secret of effective parliamentary opposition was his. He was not content to pursue a policy of masterly inactivity. Parliamentary tactics meant to him something more than merely making a set speech and walking into the division lobby in support of it. With all his heart and soul, with every faculty alert, watching as well as praying, he threw himself into the work of frustrating the designs of Mr Balfour and Mr Chamberlain, as Mr Gladstone formerly hurled himself against Lord Beaconsfield, and Lord Randolph Churchill, in his turn, against Mr Gladstone. "My

purpose," said Mr Gladstone at Oxford on the eve of the session of 1878, "is day and night, week by week, month by month, to counterwork what I believe to be the purpose of Lord Beaconsfield." "The business of an Opposition," said Lord Randolph Churchill, "is to oppose." This epic spirit Churchill succeeded in infusing into the session of 1904. His example kindled to emulation the more ambitious and eager members of the regular Opposition, and called forth upon the other side a fierce spirit of reprisal.

The adjournment for the Easter recess marked a crisis in the state of feeling in the House of Commons. Closely associated with Churchill in his below-the-gangway tactics was Major Seely, the Conservative member for the Isle of Wight, elected while he was on active service in South Africa. Worsted in debate, completely outranged by the withering fire of reasoning, sarcasm and invective, the Chamberlainites concentrated their energies upon the effort to prevent either of these two members being heard in the House. The movement culminated in two disgraceful scenes just before the House rose.

On 22nd March Major Seely rose to support Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's motion of censure with regard to indentured Chinese Labour Ordinance. He was greeted with shouts of "Oh, oh!" and endeavoured to continue his speech amid groans, ironical cheers, loud conversation and inarticulate interruptions. Churchill, rising to support his friend, appealed to the Speaker on a point of order. "I am quite unable to hear what my hon. friend is saying, owing to the vulgar clamour of the Conservative party." It was not quite the soft answer which turns away wrath. The Speaker's appeal for order was in vain, and Major Seely, valiantly sticking to his guns, continued his speech amid a general uproar. Unfortunately, the game was one which two could play at. In Mr Balfour's own phrase, the limits of human nature had been reached, and when the Prime Minister rose to reply, he was greeted by the same tactics from the Irish benches. The chorus of taunts, and jeers and obstructionist cries grew, until the Leader of the British Parliament resigned the undignified contest.

A week later, Churchill rose to address the House on the motion for adjournment. Mr Balfour chose the same moment to rise and walk out of the House. It was an unfortunate choice, for, simultaneously, as if at a preconcerted signal, the members who had tried to shout down Major Seely rose in their places and filed out of the Chamber. Failing to silence their assailants, they endeavoured to deprive them of an audience. Not to the Irish Nationalist party, but to that Unionist party in which Mr Chamberlain once boasted that he was associated with "English gentlemen," belongs the honour of having introduced the method of organised boycott into the proceedings of the Imperial Parliament. "For my part," Sir Charles Dalrymple wrote to the *Times*, "I rejoice that such a definite expression of feeling was yesterday manifested." Against this we may put the description of the scene by Mr Ian Malcolm, a chivalrous and high-spirited supporter of Mr Balfour, who agreed neither "with Mr Churchill's opinions nor with the acerbity of his language."

"I can find nothing to rejoice at in the spectacle which we witnessed on Tuesday last,

when some 250 members of the Unionist party withdrew from the Chamber when Mr Churchill rose to speak; whilst those who had the audacity to remain and listen were besought to join the hilarious throng outside in the lobby by gentlemen whose party usefulness it has hitherto been difficult to ascertain. The dignity and decency of these proceedings were not enhanced by the fact that the spaces behind the swing doors at one end of the Chamber and behind Mr Speaker's chair at the other end were blocked, during Mr Churchill's speech, by knots of jeering British members."

The immediate results were hardly gratifying to the authors of these tactics. Major Seely resigned his seat forthwith, and appealed from his party to his constituents for a vote of confidence. The Liberals decided not to oppose him, and the Conservatives were unable to find a candidate prepared to fight a bye-election on a Chinese Labour issue. Those whose clamour had provoked his resignation had the mortification of seeing his unopposed return. Churchill took his revenge with an audacity and ingenuity even more exasperating. He did not resign. He denied the right of any section of the House of Commons to intervene between him and

his constituents. But he placed the matter in the hands of his local Association, which consisted of a majority of Chamberlainites. Let it pass a resolution calling for his resignation, and it would be forthcoming immediately. The Association wisely declined his offer, and perhaps it was not uninfluenced by what had happened in the Isle of Wight. Willing to wound and yet afraid to strike, the Tariff Reformers found little comfort during the Easter Vacation.

During the recess an event happened which had an all-important bearing upon Churchill's position in the House of Commons. A deputation waited upon him from the Liberal Association of North-West Manchester, that great industrial and commercial constituency which, through the historic Free Trade Hall, is indissolubly connected with the names of Cobden and Bright. He was invited to become Free Trade candidate for this Division with the full and official support of the Liberal Association. The seat was held, by a large majority, by Sir William Houldsworth, a supporter of the Government, a most influential local employer, and a man widely

and deservedly popular. To throw down the gauntlet to such a champion would be a hazardous exploit, but with that indomitable spirit which is one of the chief elements of his strength, Churchill resolved to accept the invitation. Other proposals had been made to him both in England and in Scotland, some offering him what were practically "safe seats." But his heart and his ambition were where the battle was thickest. The greater the danger the greater the glory and the triumph. He addressed a meeting of the Liberal Council, stating frankly that his views on certain constitutional questions differed from the generally accepted Liberal views, but urging the formation of "one long line of battle" on the Free Trade issue. He pledged himself "to work in close co-operation with the Liberal party in just the same way as the Liberal Unionists in 1886 worked in effective co-operation with the Conservatives." It was as Liberal candidate for North-West Manchester that "the junior member for Oldham" reappeared in Parliament.

For the remainder of that session Winston Churchill took his place beside Lloyd-George,

as one of the unofficial leaders of the Opposition. Differing widely in temperament, they both possess, in a superlative degree, the political instinct. The nimble Welshman and the dashing Englishman played the political game with the same verve and resource. Whatsoever their hands found to do they did it with all their might. The dilatoriness of the Government, and the congested state of public business, gave them their opportunity. The Aliens Bill, the Licensing Bill, the Education (Defaulting Authorities) Bill were not introduced till far on in the session, and there were also upon the list a number of less important measures. Lloyd-George's activities were chiefly directed towards the Licensing and Education Bills, while Churchill marked for his own the Aliens Bill. The Licensing Bill was only carried by the most drastic application of the closure. In order to pass this measure, to the provisions of which many members of their party were strongly opposed, ministers had to rob the House of its deliberative functions and transform it into a registering machine. The Education (Defaulting Authorities) Bill was also carried by

closure in a House consisting of Government members alone, the entire Opposition having left the Chamber as a protest against the suppression of the right of discussion. The Aliens Bill failed to run the gauntlet of the Standing Committee on Law, and perished miserably in the "massacre of the innocents" before the end of the session.

In the Aliens Bill Churchill detected one of those peddling and vexatious attempts at the introduction of "protection by hypodermic syringe." On the one hand the Bill gratified an extremely noisy and pertinacious section of the Government's supporters; on the other hand it tended to inflame public opinion against "the dirty foreigner," and to accustom the public mind to the idea of proscription. According to the report of the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, the number of aliens in this country is very small, ·69 per cent. of the population, as compared with 1·38 per cent. in Germany, 2·66 per cent. in France, 9·58 per cent. in Switzerland, and 13·76 per cent. in the United States. The Commission further reported that disease was relatively scarce, and that very few aliens

indeed became chargeable on the rates. In the face of this report a Bill was introduced, the scope and intention of which extended far beyond the exclusion or deportation of known criminals or prostitutes, concerning which all parties were agreed. The Bill, instead of strictly defining the grounds and manner of exclusion, delegated vast and indeterminate powers to police or Customs officials, acting under regulations to be made by the Home Secretary, but not included in the Bill. It was an attempt to establish in this country a system of arbitrary police interference and espionage on the Russian model. To say that Churchill hurled himself against it is but to do justice to the impetuous nature of his onslaught. The reference of the Bill to the Standing Committee on Law, in which the closure could not be applied, gave him his opportunity, and would further seem to indicate that the measure was introduced for show purposes rather than with any serious and deliberate intention. Word by word, and clause by clause, the Bill was fought out in Committee. One amendment was as good as another for Churchill's pur-

pose, so long as he could speak for or against it. Time was the weapon with which he defied the hostile majority, and time killed the Bill. Three lines in six days was the rate of progress, and the Bill was withdrawn before the end of the session.

An attempt was made to prejudice Churchill and other opponents of the Bill in the eyes of the electors by representing them as the champions of criminal aliens. The effort never got beyond being an attempt. An offer was made by the opponents of the Bill to pass with general consent clauses which would secure the exclusion of known criminals and the banishment of aliens convicted of serious offences. The offer was refused and the authors of the Bill were hoist with their own petard. The stigma which they attempted to throw upon the Opposition recoiled upon themselves. The whole episode was an instructive lesson in parliamentary strategy.

It was round the annual Finance Bill that the battle raged thickest. The Finance Bill is ever the strategic point of assault upon a Government in difficulties. Not since the

WINSTON SPENCER CHURCHILL, M.P.
At the end of the Session of 1904

last days of the Rosebery Government had there been a bombardment so skilfully planned, so stubbornly maintained, and so brilliantly executed. For some sessions past a committee of private members on the Liberal side had existed with the object of operating on the Finance Bill. Whatever its private deliberations may have been, there had never been much to show for them in open debate. But in the session of 1904 Mr M'Kenna and Mr W. S. Robson made reputations by their handling of the tobacco duties. Mr Whitley, Mr Lough, Mr Runciman, and Mr Trevelyan proved themselves men of sterling parliamentary metal. And ever first on the barricade, and first in the trenches, was Winston Spencer Churchill.

The daring of his strategy is exemplified by his amendment to the tea duty. The policy of Preferential Tariffs was before the country, but all efforts to secure a discussion of the plain issue in the House had failed. The most definite statement of the Prime Minister was that he had no settled convictions. When the tea duty came along, therefore, Mr Churchill, occupying a position of

greater freedom and less responsibility than the official members of the Opposition, proposed to move an amendment granting a preference on Colonial tea. Up jumped Mr Balfour to give an ironical welcome to this "new and unexpected recruit" on the part of "those of us who are in favour of preference." It was a fatal slip. Mr Asquith was immediately on his feet, supporting the motion to report progress in view of this sensational avowal by the Prime Minister. The motion was crushed, of course, by the machine-like majority, but the Prime Minister fled from the scene of his discomfiture. Churchill gaily proceeded to move his amendment. His object, he said,

"was to draw a distinction between two classes of tea which came into this country—first, the tea which was the produce of British Colonies, and was sent, not for mere sordid gain, but to strengthen the ties of Imperial sentiment—and next the tea which was sent here as the result of an evil conspiracy between foreign countries and the Cobden Club, with the intention of breaking the constitution of Englishmen, and driving a wedge between the Mother Country and the Colonies."

There was a serious purpose beneath this raillery. The speech was a challenge to the wire-pullers and caucus managers of the Tariff Reform League to bring forward their proposals in the open light of day. But they were glued to their seats by the necessity of keeping Mr Balfour in power until their plans had matured. The amendment was defeated as a matter of course. It had served its purpose, however. It was an object lesson and a demonstration to the country that ministers retained office at the expense of their convictions.

It was his bold initiative which led to the remarkable "all-night sitting," when the hour-hand went twice round the clock before the wearied House rose. About one o'clock in the morning the Chancellor of the Exchequer had offered to consent to an adjournment on the understanding that no difficulty would be put in the way of the Budget being finished at the next sitting. A mildly deprecating murmur from the Front Opposition Bench seemed to indicate no very rooted objection, and the Chancellor was already congratulating himself on his tact. His hopes were rudely

disturbed. Churchill was already in the breach. "At any rate," he interpellated, "the right hon. gentleman has no agreement with me." Marked approval from "below the gangway" showed that he had accurately gauged the spirit of the Opposition, and the sitting proceeded.

To the superficial critic it might seem that much of Churchill's action was vexatious, that he made mountains out of molehills, and that he opposed for the mere sake of opposition. Nevertheless, every act was governed by a profound and reasoned conviction that the best service he could render his country was to bring about a General Election as soon as possible. He saw what he believed, on good grounds, to be a conspiracy between Mr Balfour and Mr Chamberlain to undermine by imperceptible degrees the established fiscal system of the country. He saw a ministry riding rough-shod over the constitutional theory of Government, and enforcing, by the aid of a machine-like party majority, measures, such as the Chinese Labour Ordinance and the Licensing Bill, for which it had received no mandate, and to

which there was every reason to suppose the vast majority of the electors were violently opposed. To hasten the appeal to the electors was, therefore, the governing aim of all his actions, of his ingenious amendments and his inexhaustible oratory.

This constant hanging upon the Government flank, sniping, raiding, cutting the lines of communications, capturing convoys, completely broke down the patience and exhausted the temper of the Government party. Mr Balfour showed his annoyance rather femininely by ostentatiously walking out of the Chamber whenever Churchill rose to speak. Mr Chamberlain was frequently goaded into heated interruptions and protestations, in which encounters he had the unusual experience of finding himself held in check by a dialectical rapier as pointed, and as deftly handled, as his own. The rank and file raged exceedingly and impotently. Mr Balfour, however, succeeded in extricating himself, like Kuropatkin, from the harassing and out-flanking movements of his enemy. He is one of the most brilliant rear-guard strategists. Many casualties were suffered,

much baggage was lost, and much proposed legislation was abandoned, but he lives to fight again. That he survived the session of 1904 is a final proof of his extraordinarily subtle and intricate parliamentary genius. No other man could have done it—few, indeed, would have attempted it.

Churchill was now an accepted member of the Liberal Opposition, working for the return of a Liberal ministry to power. Shortly after his adoption as candidate for North-West Manchester he had transferred his seat to the Liberal side of the House. His co-operation with the party was not confined to Parliament. On the occasion of the annual meeting of the National Liberal Federation, at Manchester, he addressed, along with Mr Morley, a great gathering of Liberals in the Free Trade Hall. At the great Cobden Centenary Demonstration in the Alexandra Palace, he followed Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and moved to enthusiasm a vaster audience than he had ever before addressed. No bye-election was complete without his powerful aid. He brought with him the very spirit of victory, and his rattling speeches at

Oswestry and at Reading were among the best-remembered incidents in two stirring contests. At Manchester, he settled down promptly to the hard, practical work of capturing a seat. The announcement that Sir William Houldsworth had resolved not to contest the seat again came as a surprise, and transformed his chance from a sporting hazard to a fair prospect. The Conservatives could never find another candidate so strong. Churchill, however, observed the Cromwellian maxim to trust in Providence and keep your powder dry. In the midst of an arduous session he found time to deliver a series of remarkable speeches in Manchester. And already there are signs that not only in the constituency he has chosen, but throughout the whole of that great industrial centre, he is to be the figure round which all the progressive forces will rally into one invincible line of battle.

At the meeting of the National Liberal Federation at Manchester,[1] referred to above, Mr Churchill moved the vote of thanks to Mr John Morley in a spirited little speech,

[1] 13th May 1904.

which may appropriately be reproduced at the end of this chapter. He said:—

"This is not the first time that I have supported Mr Morley. I supported him at the beginning of the year, when he introduced his amendment into the House of Commons in favour of liberty of trade. I supported him two years ago, when he moved the adjournment of the House in order to discuss the case—I daresay you have forgotten it—of a Mr Cartwright, and when he was defending, as I then thought and still think, the liberty of the subject. It was my duty to support him then; it is my duty to-night, my duty and my pleasure. It is a pleasure to listen to a speech like that. It is a pleasure personally to me, because Mr Morley was, I think, almost the only member of the late Liberal Government to whom my father invariably referred—was permitted to refer—as "his right hon. friend." That is a distinction which I am proud to inherit. Quite apart from any personal feelings, it is perfectly clear to everyone that when Mr Morley comes at such a time of our fortunes as this into the Free Trade Hall, the Free Trade candidate for the division in which this famous building stands must be there.

"Now you have before you on the paper the resolution which I am charged to move, and I can assure you I put it quite honestly to the

meeting, because, if I am not letting out a secret, I was allowed to make it up myself. I listened with great interest to the remarkable speech which my right honourable friend has delivered. I welcome that speech as a whole. I welcome his allusion to the need—the urgent need—of retrenchment. I welcome his broad, tolerant, statesmanlike outlook upon the whole arena of political affairs, and I welcome—I was going to say I welcome especially—what he said and what he did not say about the great problem of Ireland. I don't pretend, I should not be honest if I did, that I am able to agree—you would not expect me; he would not expect me—to agree with his views altogether on that question. But I welcome what he said and what he did not say, because I think its object and its intention—and coming from such a man as Mr Morley above all others—its object is to make it easier for Free Traders of all parties to stand together in the near future in one long line.

"For since Mr Balfour executed what Mr Morley has charitably called the Sheffield policy, and what I will venture to call the Sheffield shuffle, I have urged, publicly and privately, a Free Trade concentration. Three months ago, as some of you may remember, standing in this very place, I appealed to the Liberals of Manchester not to make the Tory and Unionist Free Traders sacrifice their political identity, but to take them in virtue of their agreement on the great dividing

issue of the day, and trust to everything else coming right in the end. The fact that I stand here to-night is a proof, I think to some extent, that in Manchester, at any rate, that appeal has not gone altogether unregarded. Sir, I recognise the tolerant attitude which the Liberal party have adopted towards the Unionist Free Traders. I appreciate the generosity with which they have cast their ægis over some of those whom Mr Chamberlain has been driving from their party, and I don't think they will have great cause to regret it. The truth is, that Free Trade does not stand alone. It is not an ordinary question, it is a touchstone. People who can agree on Free Trade, on the economic, financial, political and moral principles which underlie it, cannot fail to find other subjects of agreement.

"Our opponents told us last autumn, in a mocking manner, that Free Trade was a shibboleth. There is many a true word spoken in jest. I do not know whether they looked up, before they used that expression, the passage from which it is taken. It is a shibboleth; and by it you can tell with moral certainty who are the men of Gilead, and who are not. Well, now, ladies and gentlemen, if we are to combine all the available forces, and I think a good many forces are available, in the defence of our Free Trade system, there are two dangers which, if you will allow me, I would draw your attention to. The armies of voters who are going to the poll at the

next election in favour of Liberalism and Free Trade candidates require to be assured that the Government their votes are going to place in power, should be, to put it plainly, a distinctively Liberal Government, which will administer the complicated and the vast business of State and Empire from their distinctively and characteristically Liberal point of view. We do not want, certainly some of those who have left Mr Chamberlain's following do not want, to see in power after the next election another Government which will do the same kind of things that this Government has done, only do them perhaps a little better, or, if you like it, a little worse.

"We want a Government, I take it, that, for instance, will think a little more about the native toiler at the bottom of the mine and a little less about the fluctuations of the share market in London. We want a Government which, instead of looking mainly abroad, will look mainly, if not, I think, entirely, at home. We want a Government and a policy which will think the condition of a slum in an English city as not less worthy of the attention of statesmen and of Parliament than a jungle in Somaliland. That is the kind of Government we want, and that is the kind of Government which we may be able to obtain. That is the kind of Government which Mr Chamberlain says will, 'after a brief interval, be hissed off the stage.' Well, let us get it first—and then we will show what we will do with the hissing.

"Now, if we know what we want—I am quite surprised I carry such a general measure of agreement—we also are lucky in knowing what we have to fight. The great leader of the Protectionist party, whatever else you may or may not think about him, has at anyrate left us in no doubt as to what use he will make of his victory if he should win it. We know perfectly well what to expect—a party of great vested interests, banded together in a formidable confederation; corruption at home, aggression to cover it up abroad; the trickery of tariff juggles, the tyranny of a party machine; sentiment by the bucketful; patriotism by the imperial pint; the open hand at the public exchequer, the open door at the public-house; dear food for the million, cheap labour for the millionaire. That is the policy of Birmingham, and we are going to erect against that policy of Birmingham the policy of Manchester.

"Then they are in another danger, which we must not overlook. Free Trade is a condition, as I hold, of progress; it is an aid to progress; it is a herald of progress—but it is not progress. Something more than that is needed. Free Trade is never to be defended by a purely negative policy. It is quite true that the combined influences of free imports and British labour and natural advantages have produced in this country a much greater accumulation of wealth than is to be seen in

those European nations which enjoy all the advantages of a conscriptive army and of scientific tariffs. But it is quite ridiculous, and we shall make ourselves ridiculous if we go about saying, in a world with so much squalor and misery, how happy, how wealthy, how contented, how luxurious we are. We must produce, if we are successfully to defend Free Trade, a positive and practical policy of social reform.

"Well, what is that policy to be? I am not entitled to advise you upon that—not even though the *Manchester Courier* denounces me as a shocking Radical, not even though the *Times* newspaper says I am almost as bad as Mr Morley. I think we have heard from him to-night in his broad survey of affairs the outline, at any rate, of a considerable quantity of practical business which requires prompt and immediate settlement. And let me say this. It is very likely that in dealing with great, urgent questions like land, like liquor, like labour, you may cause some little excitement and even some little irritation among the great vested interests which are affected by your legislation. We wish to treat everybody with the greatest kindness and with the greatest respect. We do not wish, if we can help it, to hurt a fly, but we have got to make this clear in regard to great and urgent social questions such as I have mentioned, that wherever private privilege comes into

collision with the public interest, the public interest must have right-of-way.

"Mr Morley has spoken about the necessity of retrenchment. Ever since I had the honour, not very long ago, of a seat in the House of Commons, from the very first month I have urged and worked and preached in favour of the cause for which Lord Randolph Churchill sacrificed everything. It is very likely that in making the necessary reductions in military establishments which wise economy and prudent policy would dictate, you will find yourself open to a certain amount of abuse. You will be told —perhaps I may say *we* shall be told—I don't in the least mind taking my share—we shall be told that we are traitors, that we are unpatriotic, that we have not learned to think Imperially. Well, don't let us worry too much about that. Don't let us trouble ourselves too much about what the Protectionists may say or may think of us, so long as we are sure, absolutely sure, that, according to our own lights and our own principles, we are doing the thing which is best in the interests and for the honour of our own people in our own land.

"The issues which will be at stake at the next election are not, I think, to be measured by the number of millions you will strike off the wasteful and worthless expenditure of this country, nor are they limited by the exact and precise legislative proposals with

which the new Parliament will have to deal. There is something more at stake than that. All through the winter we have listened to a revival of all the stale, old, exploded arguments of Protection ; to all sorts of doctrines and theories about trade and commerce, which it had been hoped in this twentieth century we had cast as far behind as the ancient popular beliefs in magic and witchcraft. That strange experience has produced in many quarters some doubts whether, after all, there is any such thing as real progress in human affairs, whether all the exertions and sacrifices of generations make much difference, whether it is not all a purposeless journeying to and fro, up and down, which leaves us at the end of the day not much further advanced than when we began. I don't blame those doubters—I don't even wonder at their doubts ; but we are here to-night to tell them they are wrong.

"We are here to sweep away those whisperings of despair. We are here to say, as Mr Birrell said, that we are not going back —we are going on. Our movements are towards a better, fairer organisation of society; and our faith is strong and high that the time shall surely come—and will come the sooner for our efforts—when the dull, grey clouds under which millions of our countrymen are monotonously toiling, will break and melt and vanish for ever in the sunshine of a new and noble age."

CHAPTER XI

A FUTURE LEADER

WINSTON Spencer Churchill is essentially a vivid personality. The lines of his character are strongly marked—the colours are bold and striking. In a crowd his figure is one of the points which catch the eye of the observer. His frame is powerfully built, but already he carries himself with something of the scholar's stoop. His reddish hair, his pale complexion, his rugged but pleasing features, his bright and eager eyes, his careless awkwardness of deportment, and his vigorous use of expressive gesture, stamp at once upon the memory the impress of a distinct individuality. He excites curiosity; he holds attention; he is interesting.

When he was "wanted" in Pretoria, the following description was circulated by the Boer authorities:—

"Englishman, twenty-five years old; about five feet eight inches tall; indifferent build; walks a little with a bend forward; pale appearance; red-brownish hair; small moustache, hardly perceptible; talks through the nose; cannot pronounce the letter 'S' properly, and does not know one word of Dutch."

There is, perhaps, a touch of malice in the portrait, but on the whole it is a faithful objective list of identification marks. The Boer police were no rivals to Mr Massingham in impressionist writing. What the portrait does not give is the style and mannerism of the man—his air of alert decision and conviction, not to say cocksureness.

On the platform Churchill not only attracts but compels attention. He is a born popular orator. He possesses himself of an audience and his personality pervades the whole meeting. The average speaker does well if he can state a fact clearly. Churchill uses words with the practised skill of an artist, not only to state facts, but to express fine and complex shades of meaning, to excite emotion, to arouse sympathy, to carry conviction. His speech is never a mere catalogue of facts and syllogisms. He allures his hearers along the

argument with droll humours, with bold metaphors, with apt and happy allusions, and with the picturesque phraseology of a rich and varied diction. His appeal is powerful, because it is to first principles and to elemental instincts. This, too, is the secret of the power of the great politician whom Churchill has singled out for his attack. But there is this difference between them. While the appeal of Joseph Chamberlain is purely material, that of Winston Churchill is fundamentally moral. The one plays upon the strings of international jealousy and individual cupidity; the other touches the chord of common humanity.

In many respects Winston's oratory resembles his father's. It is dashing, high-spirited, pungent and popular. He is never over the heads of his audience. He can talk policy to the House of Commons and economics to a meeting of Manchester business men, and he can hold the attention of a mass meeting on the same subjects. He is equally at home in the senate, on the platform, and on the stump. But his range is wider, his grip is firmer and his culture is deeper than

his father's. He has himself more completely in control. He has never been guilty of that oratorical license which allowed Lord Randolph to refer to "the Moloch of Midlothian," but he has the same fondness for, and skill in the use of, invective, and it is not at all surprising that his quondam associates are sore from his raillery. He has described Mr Brodrick as suffering from "German measles," Mr Balfour as a "Sheffield shuffler," Mr Arnold Forster as a "Jack in office," the Tariff Reform League as "a disreputable body," whose support was "as fatal as prussic acid" to candidates, and he has dared to laugh at Mr Chamberlain, whose patriotism he has measured "by the imperial pint." He has doubted whether all the failures of the Government may be attributed, as Mr Chamberlain insinuates, "to the speeches of the leader of the Opposition and the traitorous intrigues of the foreign members of the Cobden Club." He has never been able to make out "why it should be honourable, patriotic, and Imperial to refine sugar, and contemptible, unworthy and pro-Boer to be engaged in jam and pickles." It is part of his philosophy of

life that the best defence is a counter attack, and a characteristic example is to be found in his well-deserved retort to Colonel Kenyon Slaney, M.P., at the Oswestry bye-election.

"I notice that Colonel Kenyon Slaney says that I and my hon. friend are renegades and traitors. I have often noticed that when political controversy becomes excited, persons of choleric disposition and limited intelligence are apt to become rude. Ladies and gentlemen, if I am a traitor, at anyrate I was fighting the Boers in South Africa when Colonel Kenyon Slaney was slandering them at home. My hon. friend and I had the honour of serving in the field for our country, while this gallant, fire-eating colonel was content to kill Kruger with his mouth in the comfortable security of England."

These, however, are but the rubble borne down on a strong and impetuous current. They have helped to gain him notoriety—they have not accounted for his success. He has attacked vigorously those who have come across his path, but his main and earnest effort has always been directed to policy.

Lord Randolph Churchill is said to have regretted that he did not throughout his career make freer use of his pen. Winston

has profited by his father's experience. His books had already given him a public standing before he entered the House. During the controversies of the past four years he has been one of the most prolific and acceptable writers of letters to the Press. The "letter to a correspondent" has been one of his favourite methods of controversy, and the raciness of his effusions have always insured them a warm welcome, as "good copy" from the newspapers. From his first session he has commanded a wider audience than most members of Cabinet rank. His literary power is as native and spontaneous as his speech, and he enjoys the rare felicity of being read both for his matter and for his manner.

The salient features in the character of Winston Churchill are will, courage, originality and magnetism. He has mapped out his course, and he pursues it with a dogged persistence. He is not to be intimidated either by party pressure or public prejudice. Unlike many Liberals, he did not hesitate to advocate conciliation during the war period when Jingoism was rampant. Later, he has again opposed the predominant spirit in his

strenuous opposition to increased expenditure on armaments. He knows not the fear of unpopularity, because he is convinced that his principles are right, and he has that confidence in himself which tells him that if he can but get the ear of the public, all will be well. Self-confidence is the essence of his courage. In parliamentary tactics he has ever taken the initiative with satisfactory results. He has made the pace and done the pioneer work of opposition. The magnetism of his character is as apparent in its negative as in its positive aspects. He repels as much as he attracts; he makes enemies as well as friends; he is no less hated than admired. Those members of the House of Commons who profess indifference to him, do so with an elaborate affectation which betrays itself.

In one sense every character in fiction is a projection of the author's own personality, but it would be arbitrary to take these characters, in their literal sense, as personal confessions. The point of view, however, may give us the clue to the temperament of the author. There is a very interesting

passage in his boyish novel, *Savrola*, in which Churchill analyses the character and motives of the hero in the great crisis of his career :—

"Was it worth it? The struggle, the labour, the constant rush of affairs, the sacrifice of so many things that make life easy or pleasant—for what? A people's good! That, he would not disguise from himself, was rather the direction than the cause of his efforts. Ambition was the motive force, and he was powerless to resist it. He could appreciate the delights of an artist, a life devoted to the search for beauty or of sport, the keenest pleasure that leaves no sting behind. To live in dreamy quiet and philosophic calm in some beautiful garden, far from the noise of men, and with every diversion that art and intellect could suggest, was, he felt, a more agreeable picture. And yet he knew that he could not endure it. 'Vehement, high and daring' was his cast of mind. The life he lived was the only one he could ever live; he must go on to the end. The end comes often early to such men, whose spirits are so wrought that they know rest only in action, contentment only in danger, and in confusion find their only peace."

"A people's good"—"ambition"—"vehe-

ment, high and daring"—"the end comes often early." These are the clues to a very complex and high-strung character. Looking back upon the crowded decade of glorious life which is his career up to the present, we cannot fail to recognise all the lines of the picture; the manifold interlacing of worldliness, and "other-worldliness," of ambition and devotion, of impulse and calculation, of passion and reason; and over all, like a hectic flush, the shadow of the end. Is there some sinister significance in the last phrase? Is there in this brilliant young life, all the converging lines of which point to exalted power, some nightmare spectre of Death on a White Horse pursuing him down the ever-narrowing vista of the years? Has Churchill crowded so much into his life because he knows his years are numbered?

There is a story, probably false, that Churchill commenced his parliamentary career with the remark, "The Churchills peg out early. I am going to make sure of my innings." It is just the kind of obvious story which gets invented. Lord Randolph Churchill died young. His son is

of an intensely high-strung and nervous temperament. He has been prodigal in the expense of his strength and energy. Can such a pace last? Is there fuel to keep up this tremendous combustion? The gossips noticed that once during last session he halted in the middle of a sentence of his speech, hesitated for a moment in the effort to gather up the broken link of memory, and then sat down abruptly with the sentence unfinished. "Nerves giving way already!" was the whisper which ran round the lobbies. There is, moreover, a curious natural defect in his voice, a sibilant undercurrent like the wheeze of the bellows beneath the organ music. Demosthenes-like, he has conquered it, and even subdued it to his use as a characteristic mannerism, but still there is always an appearance of conscious effort in his utterance. On such a frail foundation as this, malicious hints and innuendoes have been put into circulation. They are of the same category as the imputations of physical cowardice which were scotched by Sir Evelyn Wood's letter at the time of the Oldham election.

His record is the best reply to these silly fables. The man who went through the Lancers' Charge at Omdurman, who saved the engine of the armoured train at Chieveley, and who escaped from Pretoria, is no coward. The logic, the knowledge, the economics, the sustained and progressive power of his writings and speeches never came from a hypodermic syringe. As to the resources of health and bodily vigour upon which he can draw, the author of this book has no data for a pathological diagnosis. No valetudinarian can aspire to lead a great political party. But Churchill has lived an active open-air life, while many other youths of his rank have been undermining their constitutions in London or Paris. He has not dropped polo since he left the army. It is still his favourite recreation, and he is on the ground several times a week. He rides to hounds, and has been known to walk into the division lobby a few days after suffering a dislocated shoulder. But still, as he himself has written, "the end comes often early to such men." This premonition must be weighed in any estimate we may form of the future.

Churchill is a fatalist. He feels upon himself the hand of destiny. He is the instrument of some great purpose of nature, only half disclosed as yet—a cell charged with a tremendous voltage of elemental energy. In the miraculous nature of some of his escapes, in the strange sequence of chance and coincidence, he seemed to trace a design that was conscious.

He came out of the Lancers' Charge at Omdurman unscathed in body, in clothes, or in accoutrements. In the armoured-train disaster at Chieveley he exposed himself for two hours to a close-range shell and rifle fire, sustaining only a skin wound on the hand. As an escaped prisoner, he walked unrecognised through the crowded streets of Pretoria. Fainting by the way, he stumbled upon the only house occupied by a friend in the enemies' country. He survived Spion Kop. For four years it may be said that he carried his life in his hands. Small wonder if he began to think that there must be before him some averting hand, or that he began to surrender himself to the promptings of an inward voice, bidding him risk all and dare

everything for the ideals which were part of his being.

In one of his letters he says—

"These hazards swoop on me out of a cloudless sky, and that I have hitherto come unscathed through them, while it fills my heart with thankfulness to God for His mercies, makes me wonder why I must be so often thrust to the brink and then withdrawn."

But his fatalism is Western rather than Oriental in character. It is dynamic rather than static. It is the fatalism of optimism and not of pessimism, of action and not of quietism, of life and not of death. He does not sit still, saying, "It is ordained," and "It can be no otherwise"; he rushes into action, affirming "*thus* and *thus* it is ordained." To him man is not the sport and plaything of fate, but the actual embodiment of fate, the image and the manifestation of God. In his famous oration on Cromwell,[1] Lord Rosebery described the great Iconoclast as "a practical mystic, the most formidable and terrible of all combinations"; and again, "a strange mixture of a strong

[1] Cromwell Tercentary Celebration, 14th November 1899.

practical nature with a sort of unearthly fatalism, with a sort of spiritual mission." The words apply to Winston Churchill. He "trusts in God and keeps his powder dry," He "works while he has the day, for the night cometh when no man can work." Even if the night come soon, Churchill will have left his mark upon his generation.

"A people's good"? "Ambition"? Who shall decide between them, and say that one is but the "direction" and the other the "cause" of effort? Not the writer of this book, for he has no skill at metaphysical psychology. No one can deny that Churchill is ambitious. It is writ large all over his career. But his ambition is wedded to an ideal. It is no unworthy and self-seeking ambition for which one road to power is as good as another. The good of the people, a stable constitution, liberty, freedom and social amelioration—these are the objects in which it realises itself and apart from which it has no existence. It is, of course, an ambition to exalt Winston, but a Winston who cares for these things, and cannot be exalted without them. If we are to believe his enemies,

and they are many, he is no more than a vain busybody, a charlatan and a demagogue, an unscrupulous adventurer, a disappointed office-seeker. The same accusations have been hurled against every great man. Churchill's career gives the lie to them. Some men change their principles in order not to change their party. Others change their party in order to preserve their principles. Churchill belongs to the latter class. It is true that he desires and wills to lead—but not in *any* direction. He does not turn like a weather-cock with every gust of popular impulse. He is ready to champion the unpopular cause, to throw himself boldly across the whim of the moment, as he did with regard to the surrendered rebels and Mr Cartwright. His whole record is consistent. His denunciation of the killing of wounded Dervishes and of the outrage upon the tomb and body of the Mahdi; his alliance with the trade-unionist leader in his first election; his plea for clemency to surrendered rebels; his chivalrous defence of the honour of his Boer captors; his attack upon the attempt to end the war by means of proclamations, and

his advocacy of vigour rather than rigour as a military policy; his vote with Mr Morley on the Cartwright case; his attack upon the Government's Budgets and Mr Brodrick's Army scheme; his defence of Free Trade—these were the distinguishing features of his career as a Tory Democrat. He has no need to be ashamed of any of them because he now sits upon the Liberal benches. Would that some who are accounted Liberal leaders had such a record to boast of.

With the exception of Joseph Chamberlain, Winston Churchill is probably the best-hated man in English politics at the present time. Success and power are difficult things to forgive in a rival. It is easy for the Free Trader to forgive Mr Chaplin or Sir Howard Vincent, but it requires an excess of the Christian spirit of forbearance to pardon Mr Chamberlain. It is easy for the "Sheffield Shuffler" to tolerate Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, but Winston Churchill is anathema maranatha. He has out-distanced all his contemporaries; he has ruthlessly brushed aside the mediocrities who cumbered his way; he has dared to match himself against

men who were political leaders before he was in his cradle. His wit stings like a whip-cord and leaves wounds which rankle. He feels his strength, he revels in the exercise of it, and often he is tempted to use it like a giant. As he mellows with age and experience, he may learn to combine his strength with gentler qualities.

Churchill shapes for power as undeviatingly and as unmistakably as did Gladstone when he was "the rising hope of those stern and unbending Tories," or Disraeli when he dreamed, and organised, and educated the "Young England Party," or Chamberlain in the Town Council of Birmingham. Compared to the ordinary politician, he is as radium to lead. Great, disturbing, and mysterious forces lie chained up within him. His character is magnetic—radiating emanations which attract or repel others. His intellect is mordant, fretting at every obstacle that meets him. He was not made for rest. An explosive energy within impels him relentlessly onwards. The instinct of decision is his. While others are laboriously calculating he is acting. While others are

counting the chances he is trying them The ambitions which direct his course are backed up by a supreme power of concentrating all his forces of character and intellect upon the end in view. To a "vehement, high, and daring" temperament he adds that genius which consists in an infinite capacity for taking pains.

The obvious parallel to the career of Winston Churchill is that of his father, Lord Randolph Churchill. Like his father, Winston has achieved a national reputation as a private member of the House of Commons. Like his father, he entered public life under the ægis of the Conservative party, holding at the same time very advanced and democratic views on social questions. Like his father, he has found himself in frequent controversy with his party, and Lord Randolph's resignation of office corresponds to Winston's crossing the floor of the House. Winston has followed in his father's footsteps, taking up the broken purpose of that career cut short, and bearing aloft "the tattered flag" with filial piety. Not only in purpose but in character and in temperament

he resembles his father. He has his father's gift of popular eloquence, his father's magnetic personality, his father's boundless ambition; but he adds to these qualities a strength and clearness of intellect, a consistency of aim, a concentration of will of which Lord Randolph fell short. He was apprenticed earlier. There was no break between his schooldays and the stern work of life. He has got the start which his father missed.

While Lord Randolph Churchill's career has supplied Winston with the immediate motive and purpose of his own, we must go further back in his ancestry to find the model on whom he has consciously and by design framed himself. He has chosen as his pattern the great Duke of Marlborough, the founder of his line, of whom Bolingbroke, his inveterate enemy, has said that he was "the greatest general and the greatest statesman that our country or any other has produced." In his study at Mount Street, as the industrious interviewer of the *World* has duly noted, hangs a framed old print of the great Marlborough. That epic of war and policy which altered the face of

Europe and consolidated the power of England after the Revolution has been the subject of his deep and brooding study. That is the school in which he learned the strategy, both of the field and of the council chamber, which he has already shown such original skill in applying.

Is it presumption or conceit for ambitious youth to aim at the highest? In an age of mediocrity these are the terms applied to anything aspiring above the uniform level of respectable commonplace. In such an age Winston Churchill has fully earned them. He has dared to aim at the highest.

The Churchill strain endures, and Winston has many characteristics in common with his great ancestor. Neither of them had an academic preparation. They both preferred the hard life of the tented field to the enervating dilettantism of the court, and they entered upon active service at the same early age. Each chose for mistress "the bright eyes of danger." The biographer of Marlborough says: "In these operations Captain Churchill not only signalised himself in the regular course of military duty, but volunteered his

service on every occasion of difficulty and danger."[1] The biographer of Winston may copy out the sentence. Marlborough is no less famous as a statesman than as a soldier; Winston has taken to politics with as much natural aptitude as he took to fighting. It is probably safe to say that had the European situation to-day offered such opportunities for a military career as it did 200 years ago, Winston would not have thrown up his commission to enter Parliament. Coxe has described the character of Marlborough in words which may be applied to his youthful descendant:—

"Averse, by character as well as by principle, from defensive warfare, he was always the assailant, and invariably pursued one grand object, regardless of minor considerations. He conquered, not by chance, or the unskilfulness of his antagonists, but by superior vigilance and activity; by the profoundness of his combinations, the unexpected celerity of his movements, and the promptitude and decision of his attacks."[2]

[1] *Memoirs of John, Duke of Marlborough*, by William Coxe, Archdeacon of Wilts (3 vols., 1818), vol. i. p. 5.
[2] *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 668.

JOHN, FIRST DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH

A FUTURE LEADER

In estimating the position which Winston Churchill may occupy in the party politics of the future, and the influence which he may exercise upon the policy of this country, the most important factor to be considered is the "direction" of his effort. "A people's good," and "the greatest happiness of the greatest number," are but vague generalities which have been appropriated by both political parties. Where is the good to be found and in what does happiness consist? Churchill is on the side of the Democracy as opposed to the tremendous power of organised capital. This earth-born Titan he would subdue to be the servant rather than the master of the state. Furthermore, he is convinced that the prosperity and happiness of nations depends much more upon social reform and industrial development at home than upon Imperial expansion and aggrandisement abroad.

With the true instinct of statesmanship Churchill has never feared names. He has concerned himself with actualities, and if his opponents have hurled nicknames at him he has been content to defeat their purpose

by associating these nicknames with sound reason and just argument. Had he been opposed to the war, he would never have run away from the term "pro-Boer." He would have accepted it and justified it. "Strike, but hear," would have been his attitude. So it is with the term, intended to be opprobrious, "Little-Englander." Churchill happens to be a "Little-Englander" in the Chamberlain acceptance of the term. That is to say, that he thinks social reform more important to "the natives of these islands" than Imperial expansion. He, too, has wandered across the "illimitable veldt," but he did not come home to laugh at "the Education Bill, Temperance Reform, Local Finance." His statement of his views on Imperialism may teach a lesson in courage and in candour to many Liberals. At the Cobden Centenary Dinner at Manchester, on 3rd June 1904, he said:—

"Mr Chamberlain has said that this is a day of great empires and not of small states. I do not admit that proposition. Empires which are great only in the sense of being large, which are mere agglomerations of reluctant people shackled together by a

central Government and an army, such empires have often in the past collapsed, and will often again collapse before the onslaught of a small homogeneous people actuated by an intenser form of patriotic sentiment. If 'that defensive league of communities under the august headship of the English Crown,' as Lord Rosebery has finely termed the British Empire—if that league be found to possess the qualities which endure the changes and shocks of the centuries, it will not be because the British Empire possesses more square miles of territory than the Empire of Russia; it will not be because it owns more subjects than the Empire of China; it will not be because it is guarded by more soldiers than the Empire of Germany: it will be because it is based upon the assent of free peoples, united with each other by noble and progressive principles; because it is animated by respect for right and justice in its dealings, whether great or small, with the nations; and because in the future history of the world, as in the past, it shall be found, on the whole, to be an agent of human progress and of international peace."

So far as the sense is concerned, it might be Mr Morley who had spoken the words. In such an Imperialism there is no place for what he has elsewhere called "purposeless

and sanguinary excursions, like those to which we are now committed in Somaliland and Tibet."

The problem of the government of Ireland is one which must be faced by the Unionist Free Traders. It has recently entered upon a new phase, which seems to bring an early solution within the bounds of practical politics. On the one hand, the settlement of the land dispute, costly as it has been, has removed the strongest objection of many of the Irish landlords to any considerable extension of the powers of local government in Ireland. The unexpected result has been a distinct Irish movement in the direction of Home Rule, which has been given vigorous expression to in the manifesto of the Irish Reform Association, of which Lord Dunraven is President. On the other hand, this movement has been reinforced by the recent growth of a strong body of opinion among thinking Conservatives in favour of some form of devolution which will relieve Parliament of that congestion of business of which the session of 1904 provided so deplorable an example. The Imperial Parliament is no longer able to deal

efficiently with the enormous and still growing volume of purely local business which comes before it. For the first time for many years the conditions are favourable to a great curative operation, and Churchill has been one of the first to welcome the opportunity. Before the issue of the Irish Reform Manifesto he had said (6th June 1904)—"I say the policy we must pursue towards Ireland is a policy of administrative Home Rule." Characteristically, he is not afraid of the label, his concern is with the thing itself and not with the name. Liberals will be ill-advised if they neglect the new line of approach which has been opened up to this old-standing problem, or if they set a false importance on names, when the thing itself is within their grasp.

A passage from a recent speech, and, indeed, the whole of his Free Trade speeches, show very clearly the social nature of his ideals and the continuity of his attachment to them. At a meeting of Liberal workers in North-West Manchester (6th June 1904) he said:—

"When I worked in association with the Conservative party I was what was called a

Tory democrat. I belonged to the more Liberal and progressive section of the Tory party. I do not care what anybody says—there are lots of men in the Conservative ranks just as Liberal, and sometimes more Liberal, in their views than are some in the Liberal ranks. You will remember that Lord Randolph Churchill, on the great questions of administrative reform, of licensing reform, of reform in retrenchment, and on other social questions, was certainly distinguished for great, prolonged and conscientious exertions to do his best to get things done and to effect the urgently-needed improvements in the social condition of the working classes. And I stand here, though under somewhat different circumstances, not in any way dissociating myself from the work he tried to do in the country. It was his labour to convert the Conservative party into an active Liberalising force. He failed, and he went down in the struggle. The triumph he secured was used by others for other purposes."

During the four years of his parliamentary career Churchill has not had many opportunities for developing a social programme. He came to Parliament without any previous political training or experience. He had to gather knowledge and skill as he went along from day to day. The immediate work which

he found lying ready to his hand absorbed all his energies. The criticism of the Government's methods in South Africa, the advocacy of retrenchment, the attack on Mr Brodrick's Army Reform Scheme, and the defence of Free Trade left him little time for more general political considerations. But he is on the right side. His sympathies are with labour as against the power of organised wealth. He is determined that capital shall be made the servant and not the master of the State. He believes that the true happiness of nations is to be secured by industrial development and social reform at home, rather than by territorial expansion and military adventures abroad.

The great issue of Free Trade brought him more directly in contact with social questions than did any of the others. A merely negative attitude did not suffice with regard to Mr Chamberlain's proposals. The great agitator, knowing well what he was doing, had probed an old wound. He put his finger on evils which undoubtedly existed—lack of employment, depression of trade, the growing handicap which heavy taxation for un-

productive services was placing upon our commerce in the markets of the world; and he proposed a remedy. It was not enough merely to oppose, to maintain the *status quo;* there must be an alternative policy. Churchill has intimated that he is preparing a fuller statement of his views on social reform than he has yet found possible. This is the next and most important step in his career.

No one who has studied impartially the varied career and achievements of this young man can doubt that he was born to greatness. Wherever fortune has led him he has pressed forward to the very van. In every work to which he has put his hand he has excelled. He will ever be a leader, whether of a forlorn hope or of a great party. Already in the House of Commons he leads by a natural right which no man can dispute. He does the inevitable act which no one had thought of before; he thinks the original thought which is so simple and obvious when once it has been uttered; he coins the happy phrase which expresses what all men have longed to say, and which thereafter comes so

aptly to every man's tongue. He is not simply a unit on one side or the other, and the transference of his vote counts for more than two on a division. He not only thinks, and feels, and speaks; he does, and the crowd who can only follow in beaten tracks do likewise.

With deliberate intention Churchill has singled out Mr Chamberlain as the antagonist against whom he is to measure his strength in the immediate future. His candidature at Manchester is more than an attempt to find a seat in the next House of Commons. North-West Manchester is but the platform from which he addresses the whole industrial north. He aims at no less than to throw Lancashire into the scale against Birmingham and the Midlands. "That is the policy of Birmingham," he said at the National Liberal Federation meeting, "and we are going to erect against that policy of Birmingham the policy of Manchester." He will revive the faded glories of the "Manchester school," raise aloft the tattered flag, and rally to his own person the dispersed forces of Free Trade in one long line of battle. It is a bold

and ambitious idea, and the struggle will be a highly dramatic one. Will he win? Is he the destined man to bring back to Lancashire the political hegemony of the provinces? He plays for high stakes, but his nerve is steady and his eye is clear. He will at any rate make a fight for it, and the fight will be something to have lived for and to have seen.

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